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COMPUTER PLAY

SEPTEMBER, 1988

SN 14042

\$2.95 US \$3.95 CAN

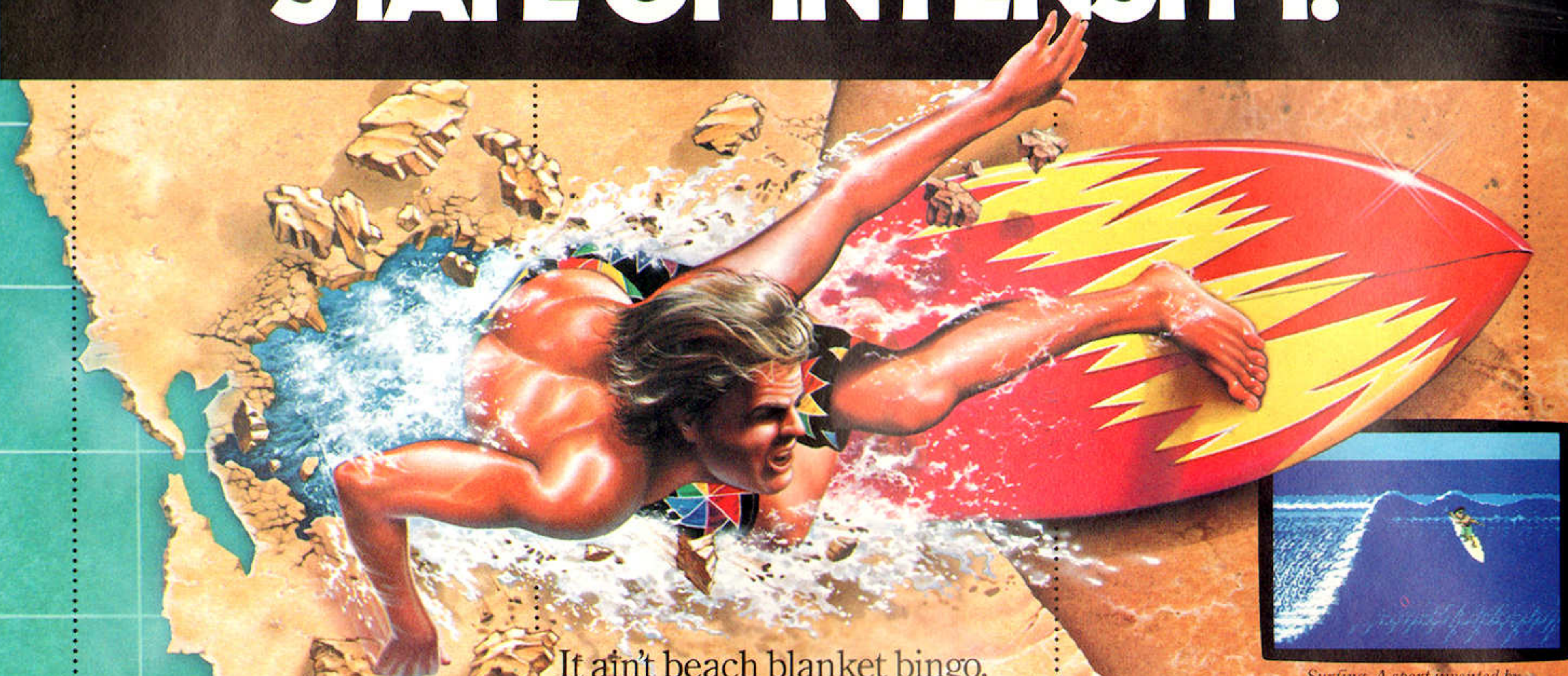
THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO COMPUTER GAMES

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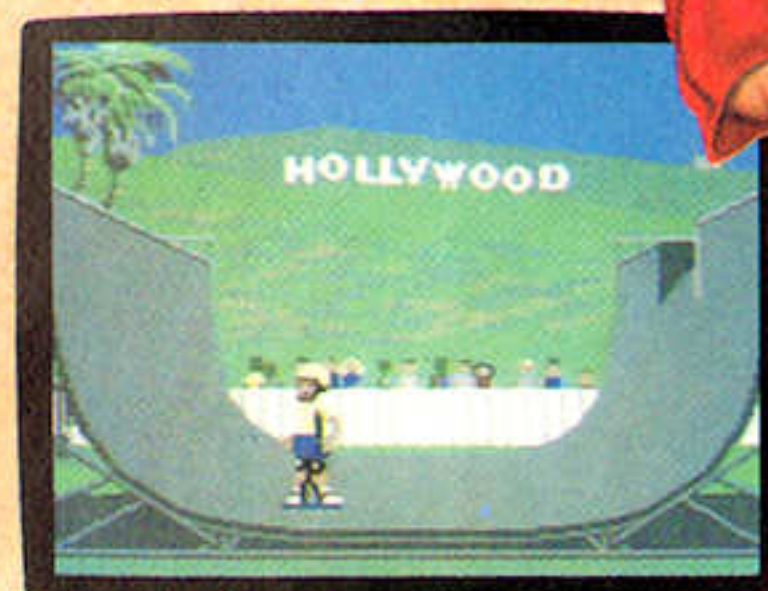
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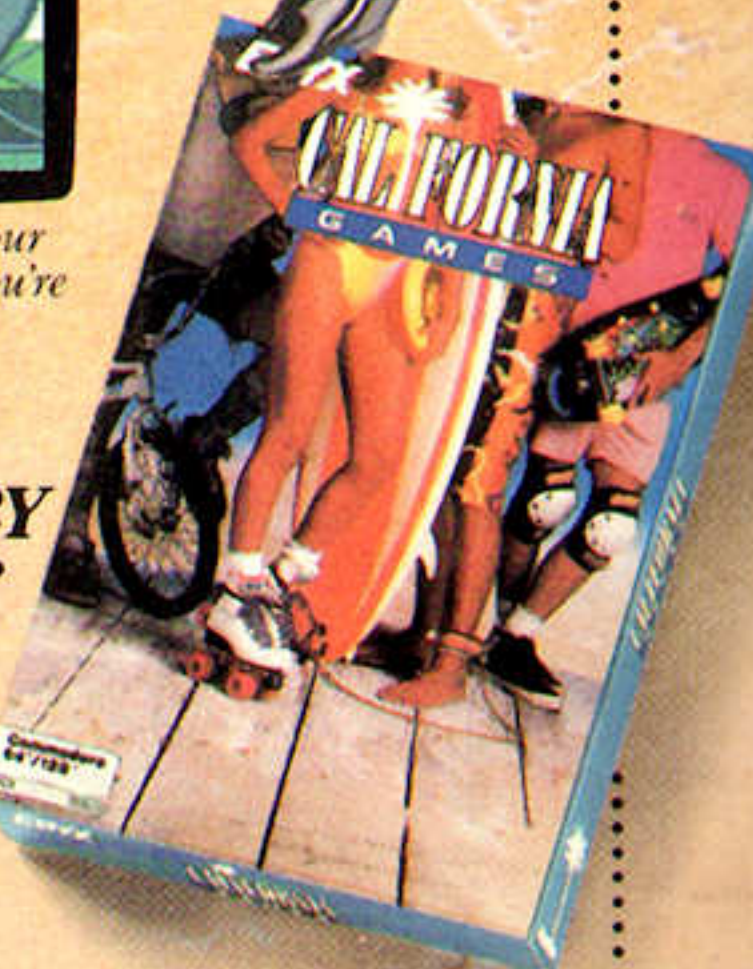
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Play big league football the way it was meant to be played... with **QUARTERBACK!**



Screen Shots taken from the IBM version.

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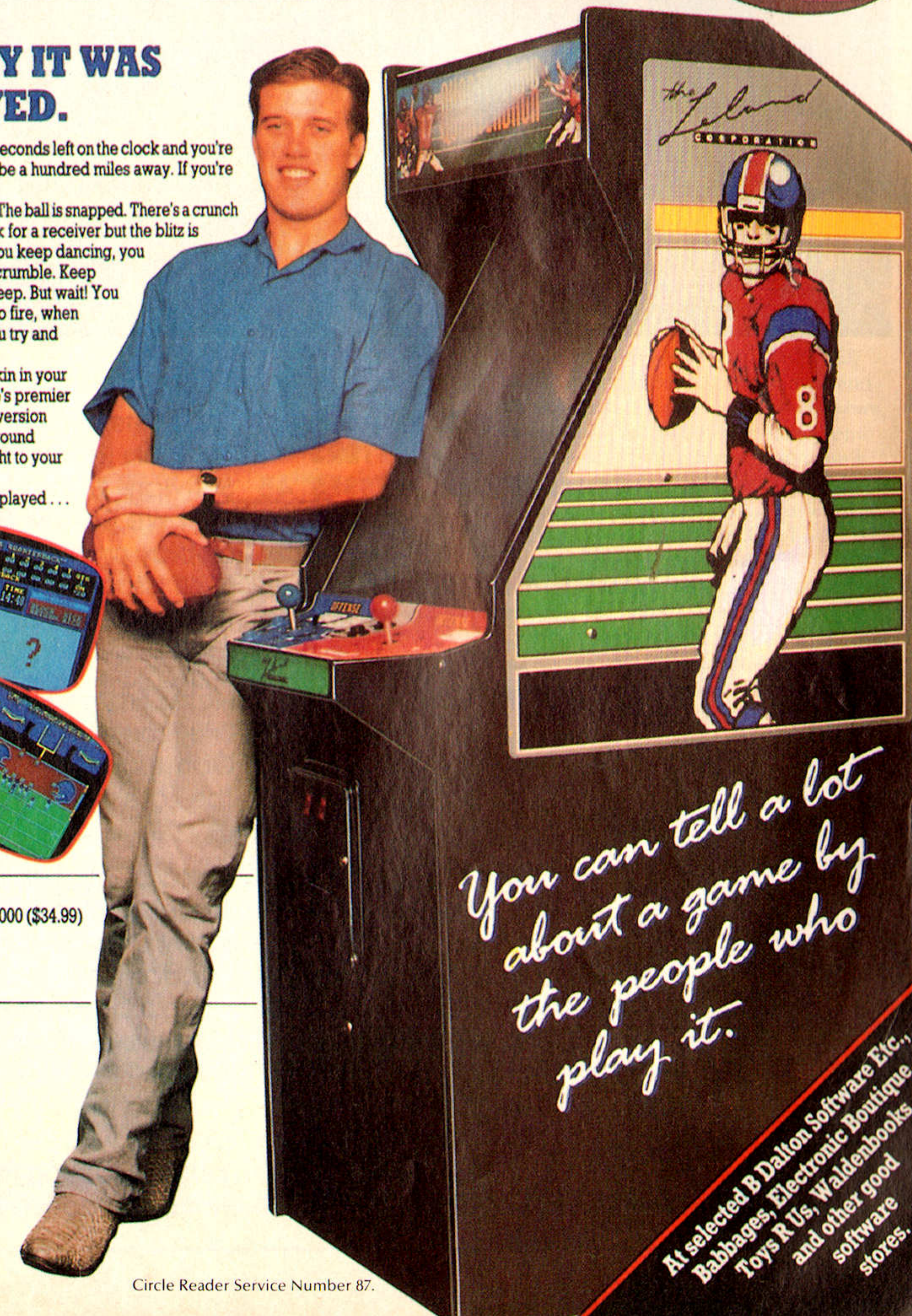
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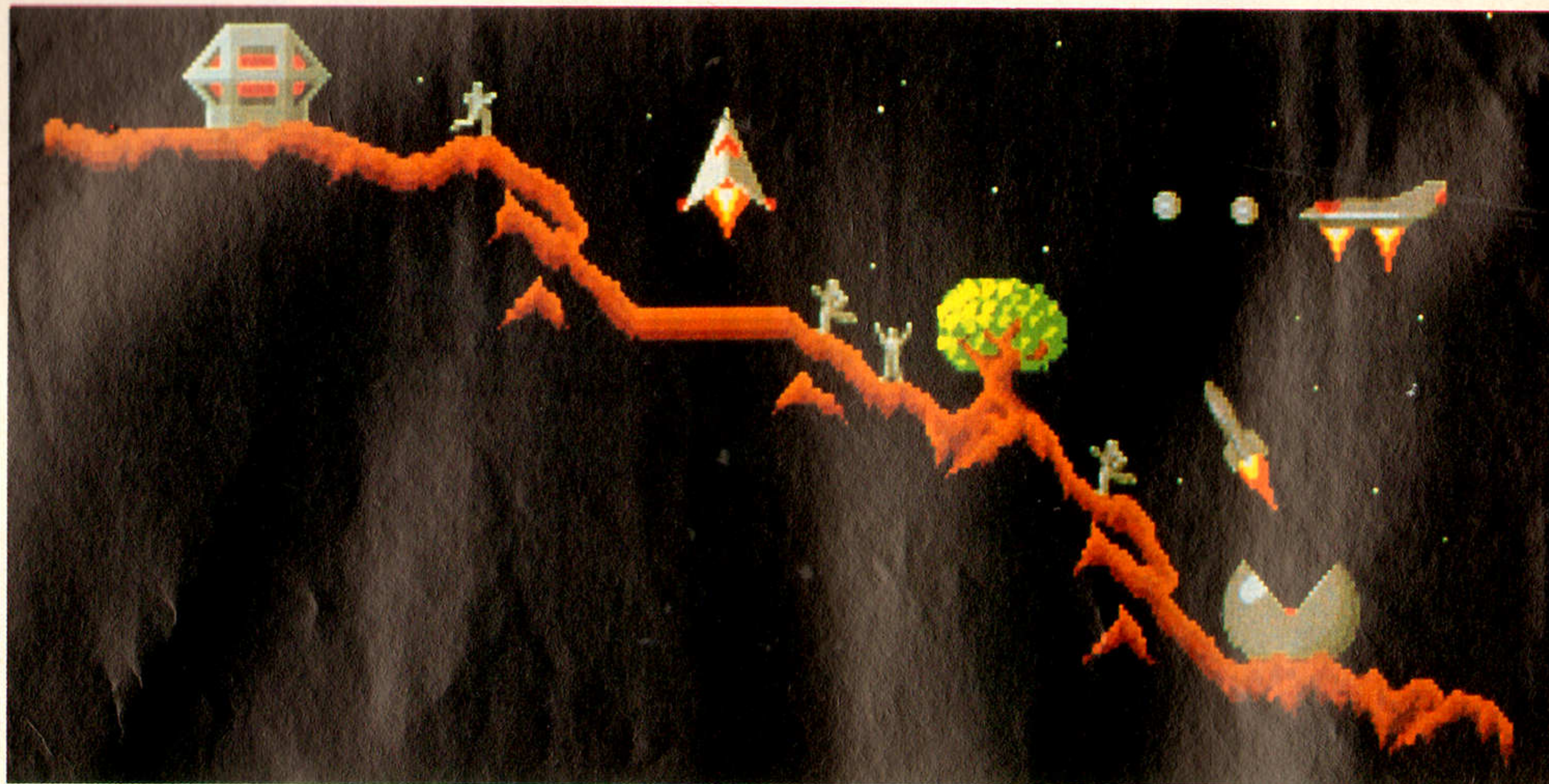
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You can tell a lot about a game by the people who play it.

At selected B Dalton Software Etc., Babbage's, Electronic Boutique, Toys R Us, Waldenbooks and other good software stores.

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Computer Play is published 12 times per year by *Computer Play Magazine Corp.*, 3321 W. Dempster, Skokie, IL 60076. Subscription rates are \$24.95 per year (12 issues). Canadian and Mexican subscribers add \$10.00. Overseas subscriptions are air mail only at \$50.00 per year. All funds must be in U.S. currency.

Second class postage pending at Franklin Park, IL and additional offices. Postmaster send address changes to *Computer Play* Box 10, Franklin Park, IL 60131.

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Editor's Page

Where Do We Go From Here?

This maybe the last editor's page the editor of this magazine will write for quite a while. That's because you'll be seeing a number of guest editorials in upcoming issues. But since this is only our second issue, a welcome to *Computer Play* is still appropriate.

What exactly is **COMPUTER PLAY**? Well, our aforementioned editor gave readers of our first issue a good idea of what to expect on our pages in the coming months. On a more abstract level, **COMPUTER PLAY**, is an idea whose time has come. Software manufacturers have greeted this publication with great interest as is evidenced by their willingness to advertise in a brand new magazine. And, as this issue was being prepared for the printer, reports from around the country told us that readers were buying the first issue of **COMPUTER PLAY** in great numbers.

It seems as if our intuitions were correct. The time for **COMPUTER PLAY** has come. So where do we go from here? That's a good question. The gaming industry has blossomed in all directions beyond the wildest dreams of the game manufacturers. Growth rates predict an even more staggering rise in sales of computer games over the next couple of decades. It will be an interesting and exciting time for computer game players, as the games and players become more sophisticated, the need for **COMPUTER PLAY** will also grow. We intend to fulfill this need for a long, long time.

While attending the Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago, this past June, we had the opportunity to see what all of the major and minor players in the game publishing industry had to offer. In every category of game playing we saw new products incorporating different ideas and technology. Not every thing we saw was fantastic, but the new ideas and innovations we saw were enough to reassure us about the strength and direction of the industry as a whole.

Game players of all types will be seeing new games and new concepts from more

companies than ever before. Quality seems to be the password, too, as consumers become more discriminating about where they spend their money. We are here to help consumers make buying decisions as they are confronted with the ever growing task of differentiating between the many products for sale.

The fun that a game offers will always be the most important criteria for our reviewers. A game can incorporate some great ideas and graphics and documentation, but if it isn't fun to play, what is it's ultimate worth? If we can help people make informed buying decisions and let them know what new products are available, then **COMPUTER PLAY** will be a useful magazine. However, we can accomplish much more. We feel that we should also strive to make **COMPUTER PLAY** a platform for both consumers and software publishers to express their views. To facilitate that, we'll be inviting prominent members of the industry, to contribute guest editorials on a regular basis. (Watch out for Ken Wasch of the Software Publishers Assn. whose editorial will appear in our October issue)

We will also publish letters from our readers every month (see page 6) so that something of a forum can be started. We encourage any of our readers to pick up a pen (or keyboard) and start communicating. Whatever your thoughts may be, we would like to hear from you. We can't promise we'll print every letter, but we'll read them all.

The proverbial bottom line is that everyone enjoy themselves playing computer and arcade games with **COMPUTER PLAY** as an integral part of their decision making for game purchases. It seems a worthwhile goal to us. So in the words of a prominent exhibitor at the Consumer Electronics Show:

LET THE GAMES BEGIN!!

Tom Aikins

Letters

Welcome!

Congratulations on your first issue of **Computer Play**. Being an entertainment software publisher, we obviously wish you much success in this endeavor.

I particularly want to comment on your "Industry News and Views" editorial. Your topic of computer and cartridge software in foreign countries was extremely educational, interesting and informative. Good job! I'm looking forward to the next issue.

Sincerely,
Karen Sherman
Director of Marketing, Sphere, Inc.
Spectrum Holobyte Software
Alameda Ca.

Bon Jour!

Your August issue was informative, colorful and a lot of fun to read. Since the demise of 'Electronic Games', 'Video Games' and a whole slew of other magazines, there's been a big void for a magazine dedicated to the computer gaming fanatic.

Your magazine fills this void 100%. You stand alone as a sole source of info for us computer junkies.

I have only one suggestion, why not have a column dedicated to software from other countries? There are many fantastic games released in the UK, Germany, France, and Holland and only a handful seem to make it over here. I'm lucky enough to have a cousin in England who sends me all the newest releases for my Amiga. I have about 60 games that aren't even available here in the US. I'm sure this is true for other computer formats as well. Anyway, Good Luck with Computer Play, and you can count me in on coming along for the ride. Yeaahh Baby!!

Raymond J. Forbes
Chicago Ridge, IL.

Editor's reply: Great Suggestion! We have started the wheels rolling (the keys clicking? the modem's humming?) and the reviews should be coming in soon. Thank you!

What! No Atari!!

I just picked up a copy of Computer Play at the **Consumer Electronics Show** in Chicago, and started paging through the August copy from back to front. About half way through the magazine I started to notice that you seem to be slanted toward several computers in your articles. Mostly the Commodore and IBM. That is a shame because I notice that the whole Atari line is missing except for a few test results which say Atari ST at the end. A true game magazine should be just that, report on all game machines or declare themselves a Commodore or Nintendo magazine. Atari has some excellent game machines and computer lines. I believe you Industry News & Views is also incorrect in stating that the West German market is dominated by the Commodore Amiga. The #1 selling computer there is the Atari ST as it is in most of Europe and England where the people there can afford disk drives with their computers, because the ST comes with a disk drive. The English and Germans are flooding the market with Atari ST software and it is not on tape. Programs like **RAMPAGE**, **URIDIUM**, **BUBBLE GHOST**, **ALTAR**, **MISSION**, **INDIANA JONES**, **WEST GAMES**, **GALAXIAN 3D**, **CINKO**, **KNICKER**, **MOTORCYCLE GP**, **FIRE BLASTER**, **TRACKER**, and many more.

I'm not saying that I want to see you as an Atari only magazine, and your game theme could be very popular at our Atari club meetings where 60-70% of our members are avid gamers and the rest play sometimes. But to be a well rounded publication, you have to let everybody in. How about some of the new XE Game System Software, after all it is a computer, not just a square box with a lot of memory.

I did like your test reports, and your grading system but not your unfair coverage.

Terry Frits
Belvidere, IL.

Editor's reply: With awareness of the incredible number of different types of gaming software and hardware on the market these days, we have scheduled specific articles for specific products, and our issues are planned out for the entire length of next year. Keep an eye out, you might be nicely surprised.

Nyuk!?!?

Thank you for your review of 'The Three Stooges' in your August issue. There are a few clarifications I would like to make so your readers won't be confused. In your last paragraph you state that "early versions of this game for the Amiga and C64 can lock up...due to copy protection"

This is not true. The Amiga version has never had any problems. The C64 version had difficulties due to the fast loaders for graphic data, not copy protection. If the user's disk drive is out of alignment or off speed, there can be problems in loading some files. This has been corrected, as you stated.

Also, the IBM version has been available since late May, and runs in EGA and CGA, and even has digitized sound effects! If there are any questions, readers are welcome to contact us.

Sincerely,
Patrick M. Cook
Quality Assurance Manager
Cinemaware Corp.
4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Westlake Village, Ca. 91362
805-459-6515

Industry News & Views

By Robert Channing

News this month centers around the **Consumer Electronics Show** held in Chicago at the McCormick Place Convention Center. Over 100,000 people of the trade attended the show. Computer Play of course had our own booth right at the front of the area reserved for the Computer and video participants.

Many celebrities, and sports stars were present at the convention including **Doug Williams**, of the **World Champion Washington Redskins**, **Spud Webb** of the **Atlanta Hawks** and of course the (!) biggest (!) was the present **World Wrestling Federation Champion**, **Andre the Giant**. (Believe me when I say even the word Giant, is an understatement.)

Spud Webb and **Doug Williams** were there to promote the Atari line of products while **Andre the Giant**, promoted video games such as **WRESTLE MANIA** by **Acclaim**, for the **Nintendo Entertainment System**. Numerous exciting new games and hardware were displayed at the show. The public definitely has a treat in store for them with the unveiling of literally dozens of new computer and video games ...

SSG has announced that anyone with either the first or second edition of **REACH FOR THE STARS** can obtain the third edition for only \$20 by mailing in the old disk, the cover to the rulebook, and a check or money order to **SSG, 1747 Orleans Ct., Walnut Creek, Ca. 94598**.

Sam Poole, Pres. of **DataSoft**, told us that changes were made in their game, **THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER**. Now its much easier to get started in the game without getting sunk, so now it's more playable than before, which was a criticism our reviewer noted in the August issue of our magazine.

On the horizon and rapidly approaching, are two new exciting titles that should soon be available. **INTERCEPTOR** from **Electronic Arts** is yet another F-16 jet simulator. But, from the previews that I have seen, this one will be hot and fast. Initial release will be on the Amiga. The action scenarios are based from a carrier outside San Francisco Bay, with the missions taking place in the surrounding Northern California area. The jet handles with ease and the scenery is minimal but has all the essentials. I'm anxious to see

how this one compares with **JET** from **subLogic**.

Another interesting title that will be launched soon into the computer software market is **ROCKET RANGER** from **Cinemaware**. The story takes place during the 1940's, but the advance rocket technology is from outer space. You are out to defeat the German Nazis, but this story also involves the rescue of a brilliant scientist and his lovely (but distressed) daughter. Drama, action, and plenty of fun.

US Gold announced its new release, **TECHNOCOP**, which will be made available on the Atari ST in the third Amiga, Apple II series, and IBM in the next few months. In this game the foul felons threaten the city but an elite police force called the 'Enforcers' go into immediate action. The 'Enforcers' mission is to stop the crime family known as **D.O.A** (Dead on arrival.) When a face appears on the 'Enforcers' super crime computer, players put the pedal to the metal to capture vicious road warriors in a thrilling car chase sequence.

There are five difficulty levels to tackle. Get the goods or the hoods and earn police badges to upgrade your officer ranking. Kill an innocent bystander and you lose your advantage. Also available from **US Gold** is **TOWER TOPPLER**, a new action adventure game available now for the Commodore 64/128 and then available in October or November for the Atari ST Apple II series, Amiga and IBM. Eight dark and deadly towers rise from the oceans' depths on the planet **Nebulus**. Players must destroy them by setting off destruction mechanisms at the top of each tower. **US Gold** titles are distributed in the United States, by **EPYX**. **Data East** has translated the movie 'Platoon' into a strategic military combat simulation. **PLATOON** is currently available for the IBM, Atari ST and Commodore 64/128 computers. **Alan Fetzner** president of **Taito**, predicts "**OPERATION WOLF** may very well prove to be the biggest home computer game seller of 1988-1989". **Don** and **Betty Shulman**, along with **Paul "Co-Go" Kramer** at **Beeshu Inc.** introduced its new line of designer color joysticks to the computer market. The 'Omega Joystick' is now available in four color combinations.

The company also demonstrated its Apple/IBM compatible joystick- The **Ultimate Superstick**. It features two sets of fire buttons for left or right handed players, four operating LED's, two centering trim dials and true arcade styling. **Beeshu** also introduced the **Dyno-Mouse** and **Spinner** lines. "Now consumers will be able to purchase an upgraded mouse in one of four color-coordinated styles" says **Betty Shulman**. For a FREE catalog of **Beeshu's** products for both your computer or video game system (Just tell them Computer Play sent you.) write to **Beeshu, Inc. 101 Wilton Ave. Middlesex NJ 08846**, or circle the readers service card number for **Beeshu** listed on the back page. Or you can call **1-201-968-6868**.

Accolade announced the release of **APOLLO 18; MISSION TO THE MOON**. It is presently available for the IBM, Tandy, and Commodore 64/128. **APOLLO 18** allows the players to recreate any one of the original missions of the 1960's. The screen graphics are based on actual footage of the Apollo missions and depict the different stages of moon flight in detail.

Dolphin Marine Systems Inc. of **Downington, Pa.** was selected the winner of the educational software category of the "**Innovations 88 Software Showcase**" at the show. **Dolphin** produces 19 sailing software titles which cover every conceivable sailing situation from a single sail 14' catboat, up to a fully rigged 52' yacht. The software is available for the IBM/PC compatible computers.

Broderbund announced the release of four new titles; **STAR WARS**, **VCR COMPANION**, **VCR COMPANION LIBRARY I** and **DOWNHILL CHALLENGE**. In addition, **Broderbund** showcased new formats for **THE ANCIENT ART OF WAR AT SEA**. **STARWARS** is a fast paced arcade adventure based on the classic **George Lucas** movie. It is presently available for the Commodore 64, Atari ST and Amiga. **VCR COMPANION**, and **VCR COMPANION LIBRARY I**, available for the Apple II series showed VCR owners how they can turn their videotapes into "Hollywood productions" built around birthdays, vacations, weddings, etc. **DOWNHILL CHALLENGE**, available in

the fall for the IBM PC, Tandy, and compatibles as well as for the Apple IIGS, Amiga, Atari ST and the Commodore 64. **DOWNHILL CHALLENGE** is an interactive ski-racing simulation featuring highly realistic 3-D animation.

Mastertronic scored a "Touchdown" at the show by announcing a new line of software under the label "Melbourne House". The first product slated for release is **John Elway's QUARTERBACK**, a home computer version of the mega-hit, coin-op. game. **QUARTERBACK'S** (by **Leland Corp.**) initial software versions have been released for the IBM and Commodore 64/128, with other versions to follow in the fall. John Elway made a personal appearance and told us that "QUARTERBACK has been my favorite game since I discovered it in the arcades. The most amazing thing to me is that the programmers have been able to make the computer version look and play like my big arcade game."

Discovery announced that they will release several new games for the Mac this fall. **Spectrum HoloByte** saved all the attendees at the show by shooting down all the Russian MIG's that flew over the area with their **FALCON** fighter simulation game, available on Mac, as well as others. **Digitek** told us they plan to release 8 new games soon. **Software Simulations** had all the sports buffs standing in line to watch and play their football, baseball and basketball games. **Titus** 'drove' the crowds wild with their **CRAZY CARS** game. Over 50,000 copies have already been sold in Europe. If you wish to be a dealer, or just need more information in the US and Canada, call; 1-818-709-6537 tell them **Computer Play** sent you.

Koei thrilled the staff of **Computer Play** when we saw our August editorial and cover displayed on the bulletin board in their booth. Thank You!! **Koei's** game **NOBONAGA'S AMBITION** was the winner of our August's **Editor's Choice Award**. **Micropose** displayed their **PROJECT STEALTH FIGHTER** simulation which brought to their booth thousands of flight simulator buffs to watch the game being played on a super size screen. Realistic beyond belief!

Strategic Simulations unveiled the first

two official **ADVANCED DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS** products ... **POOL OF RADIANCE** represents the first in a line of software created by **SSI** in collaboration with **TSR** ... the producer of the legendary **Dungeons and Dragons**, and **Advanced Dungeons**, fantasy and role playing game systems. **SSI's** designers showed us how the characters can be rolled-up (as in dice) from four Classes, six Races, and nine Alignments in the classic AD&D game fashion or use the party that is already provided, as seen, the computer graphics are strictly state-of-the-art. Cities, dungeons, and the many encounters are shown in realistic 3-D perspective. Add the non-player characters to the party of six to fill out the eight character party. Control the characters during battle or let the computer handle some or all the exciting action. **POOL OF RADIANCE** is presently available for the Commodore 64/128 and IBM, Apple II versions will be also available shortly. **SSI's** other dynamic new game is **HEROES OF THE LANCE**.

This game is derived from the first **DRAGONLANCE** game module, **DRAGONS OF DESPAIR** and marks the first computer action game that re-creates the epic battle between good and evil on the world of **Krynn**. The player controls eight characters, each with different specialized skills and attributes. These adventurers must be guided into the treacherous ruins of the temple **Xok Tsaroth** to retrieve the precious **Disks of Mishakal**. They must defeat hordes of monstrous **Draconians** in hand to hand combat, deal with powerful magic, and survive in the onslaught of the attacks from gully dwarves, skeletal undead, and countless other terrors. Available for the Commodore 64/128, Atari ST, Amiga, and IBM computers.

Nintendo's third party licensees dominated the video game section of the show with new releases from all. **Data East** brought out **COBRA COMMAND**, which is based on the hit arcade version of the same name. The **Nintendo Entertainment System** version has been modified from the original coin-op game to offer role playing characteristics and text. In **COBRA COMMAND**, the player mans a helicopter while trying to rescue hostages through six levels of play. Approximately

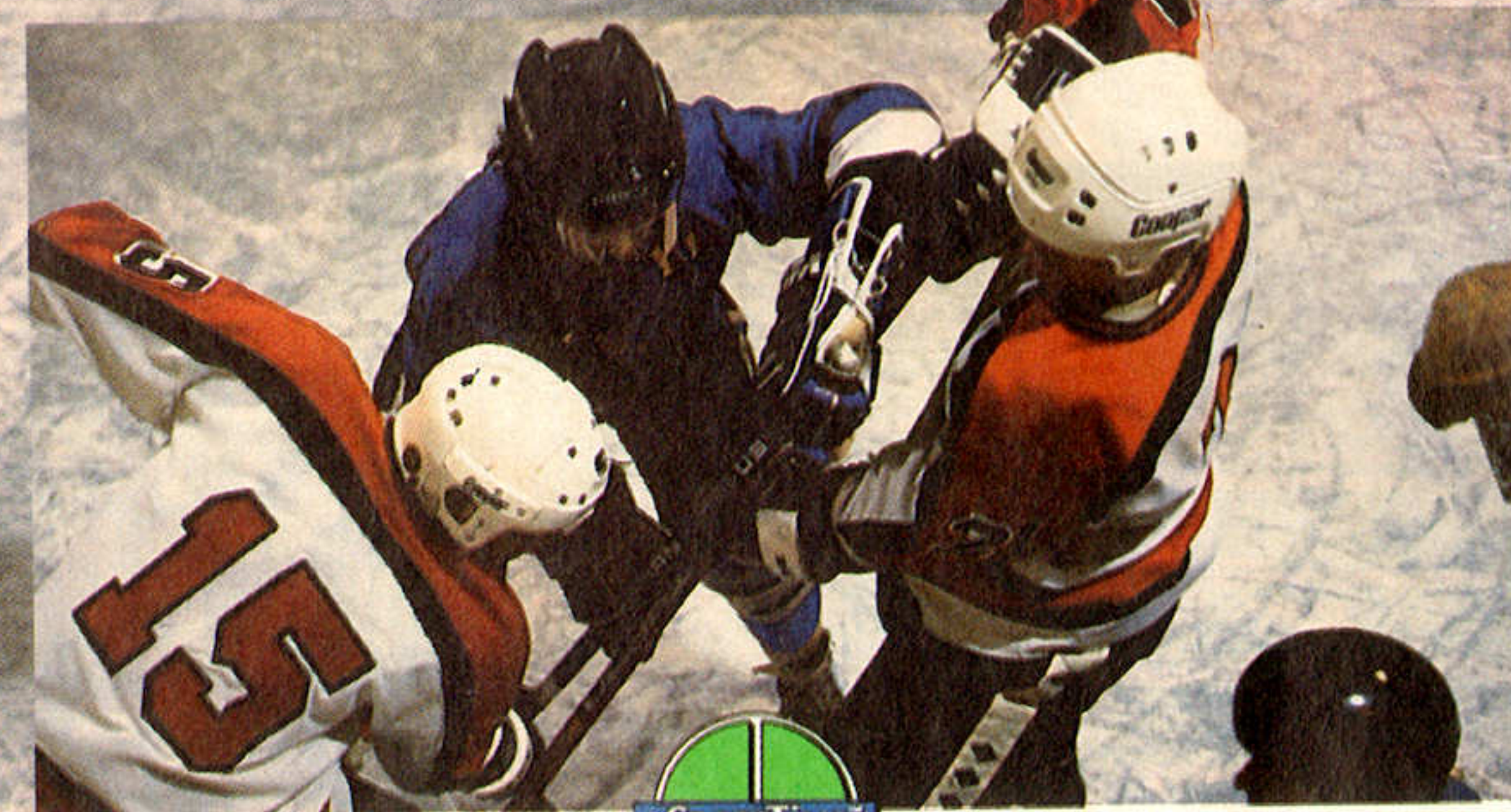
30 hostages need to be rescued per level and each level increases with difficulty. **Activision-Mediagenic** introduced several additional titles for the **Nintendo**; including **ZOMBIE HUNTER**, a fantasy arcade adventure where players explore on ancient world of mystery and danger. The user is cast as the zombie hunter and is forced to battle bizarre inhabitants like elf soldiers, axe maidens, pre-historic birds and even the dreaded zombies as the user gathers treasures and makes his way to the castle of the beast. **Tengen** excited the sports enthusiasts with their release of **RBI BASEBALL** for the **Nintendo**. **RBI BASEBALL**, is the only game that is officially licensed by the **Major League Baseball Players Association**. **Tengen's** other **Nintendo** release **GAUNTLET**, is the direct heir of the no.1 arcade hit by the same name, it features the same four exciting heroes as the arcade version and provides on unusual two player simultaneous option.

Acclaim Entertainment released their blockbuster **Nintendo** game **RAMBO, IT'S TIME TO SETTLE THE SCORE**. **SNK** announced two more titles for the **Nintendo**, **GUERRILLA WAR** and **TOUCHDOWN FEVER**, will be released later this year. **Nintendo's** version of **DOUBLE DRAGON**, will also be scheduled for delivery from **Tradewest**.

Sega will also be releasing their **DOUBLE DRAGON** built for their machine. **Sega** also announced the release of **THUNDERBLADE**, in a two Mega Game. **SHINABI**, an arcade translation, **MIRACLE WARRIORS**, **SEAL OF THE DARK LORD**, their first roleplaying game featuring a battery backup memory allowing up to five games to be saved. **PHANTASY STAR**, Mega role playing game; and finally **ALF** featuring (who else?) **Alf** himself! **Atari** will issue 49 new game titles in the second half of '88. More than 20 games will be released for the 7800 system including **BALLBLAZER**, from **LucasFilm Games Ltd.** an action arcade game and for the sports fan, **SUMMER GAMES**, and **WINTER GAMES**, both licensed from **Epyx**.

See you all next month!

The puck stops here!



SUPERSTAR ICE HOCKEY

Designed by Ed Ringler



STOP LOOKING. THEY DON'T GET ANY BETTER THAN THIS.

Here's what the critics say about the Superstar Ice Hockey action, strategy and on-ice moves:

"Superstar Ice Hockey is the best action-strategy sports simulation ever published. Period!"

—Ahoy!

"It combines 3 distinctly different elements of professional



Fast realistic action ice hockey — on-ice action, coaching and strategy, front office decision making — into one very impressive package."

—Run Magazine

"...comes pretty close to capturing the mental excitement of the game."

—PC Magazine

"Superstar Ice Hockey is one of the



Complete league stats best sports simulations I've seen in a long time."

—Family Computing

"The actual game has a nice feel to it, giving you the distinct

impression of actually being out there on the ice!" —Computer Entertainer

"It's a crowd-pleasing software hat trick that scores with every shot."

—Commodore

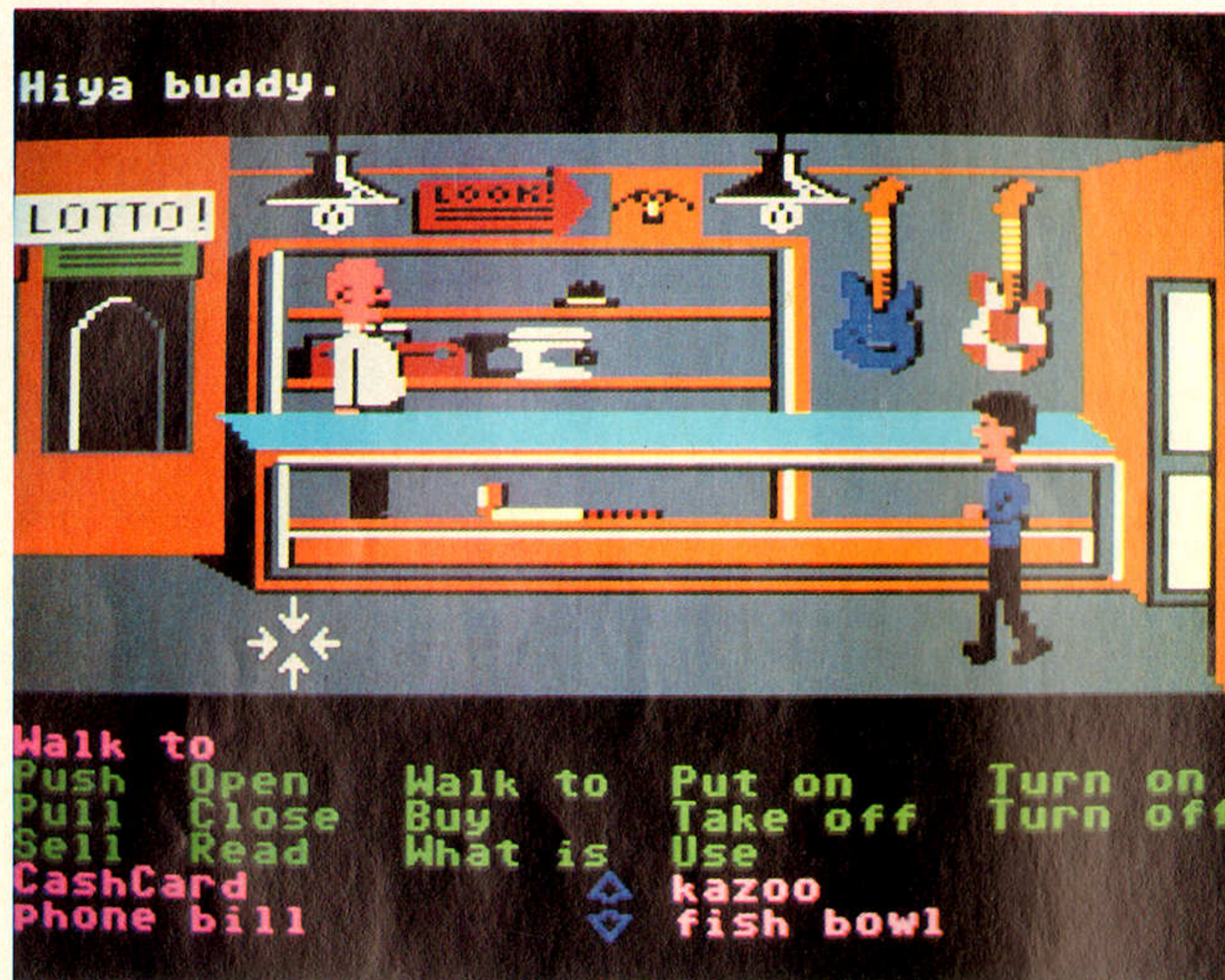
See what all the excitement is about. Play Superstar Ice Hockey by SportTime yourself!



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Save that Girl, and Your Brains



By George Thomas

As a reporter for a sleazily tabloid like the National Inquisitor, you'd think that you would have seen or read, it all. Right? You have possessed toasters, vegetarian vampires, two-headed turtles, etc. But along comes the clincher—aliens taking over the phone company in an attempt to reduce the IQ of everyone in the world to single digits.

It sounds unbelievable as the rest of the stories in the National Inquisitor but this one is apparently true. And you, Zak McCracken, ace reporter for the above-mentioned bastion of journalistic integrity, are the only one who can save the plant from turning into a mass of walking squash brains.

You'll receive some help however, in the form of Leslie and Annie, two Yale coeds and Melissa, a dedicated occultist. Other than that, you're on your own.

This is the premise of **ZAK MCCRACKEN AND THE ALIEN MINDBENDERS**, the newest release from Lucasfilm Games. By the time you read this the game will be available in the following formats: IBM, Tandy, Apple

and Commodore. We received an advance copy of the IBM format and spent a number of hours enjoyably, trying to save the planet from a case of terminal stupidity. There are puzzles and riddles, jokes and clues everywhere in this game and the accompanying documentation.

In fact, one of the most amusing parts of the whole game is the copy of the National Inquisitor tabloid that is included. You won't be rolling on the floor from reading it, but it will make you chuckle and there are lots of clues in the stories that point you in the right direction to win the game. This paper is an American version of The Guardian, which came with the Jinxter game that was reviewed in our last issue. Both are satirical and funny, one with a British sense of humor, one with an American.

Anyway, back to the story. Zak and his friends must find the aliens' stupidity machine and disable it before the 60 cycle hum they have introduced over the phone lines totally stupifies everyone on earth. Their quest takes them from Stonehenge to Zaire to Mars and back. They're aided by their interplanetary VW bus (this is 1997) and whatever artifacts

they can pick up along the way.

The game, as the designers intended, has a cinematic feel as you might expect, coming as it does from Lucasfilms. You can cut from one character to another when they are in different locations to see how they are doing on their specific missions. Also, at various times, the game takes you to different scenes to show you what is happening with the aliens, without of course giving away their location. And, you can change your perspective of a scene by zooming in for close-ups in some situations. We aren't aware of any other adventure games where this is possible. It's a neat effect and may provide some insight into the future of game programming in general.

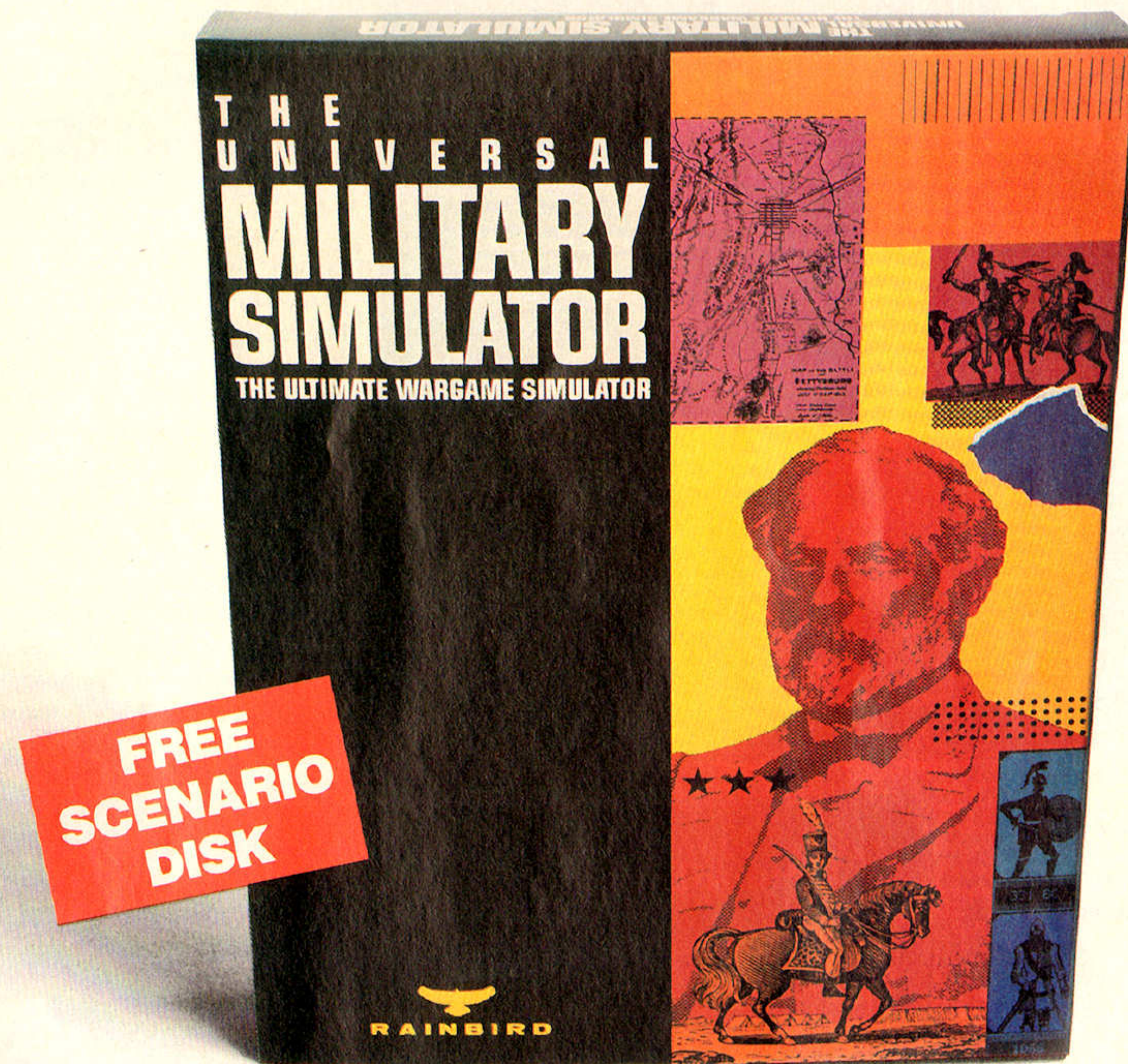
We played the game using a keyboard but would recommend a mouse or joystick for even easier operation. It's easy to get Zak to do things but hard to know exactly what it is you want him to do. We walked him all around his apartment at the beginning, paid his phone bill, put him on the bus to the airport and flew him to Seattle. We even got him to use the restroom on the plane. Zak is modest, though. The screen shifts to the side, obscuring him from view until he is done.

It was a little difficult at first to figure out how to use the articles we picked up on the way (we picked up everything we could, so should you) but once we got the terminology down, things went very smoothly. You have to keep your eyes open and look for clues every step of the way to pick on everything that is happening.

One nice feature that we liked is the fact that you can't get "killed" by messing things up and have to start the game all over. It makes it quite a bit easier for beginners to get

12 ▶

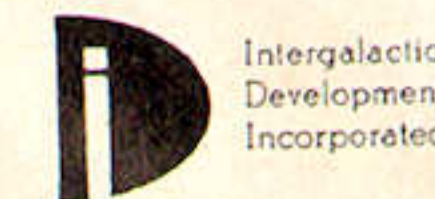
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To Catch a Thief

Monaco-Ville
Mon 9 am

Monaco's main industry is tourism. It also produces colorful postage stamps and serves as headquarters for many foreign

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By Rusel Demaria

She's been around the world, and all over the United States. Now Carmen Sandiego, infamous ringleader of the notorious V.I.L.E. criminal organization, is busy robbing the famous antiquities of Europe. In this highly enjoyable, and incidentally, educational game, you must play the detective who rounds up Carmen's busy henchmen and sees that they serve long prison terms.

For those unfamiliar with the Carmen Sandiego series from Broderbund Software, the format is the same in all three scenarios. As a dedicated detective, you must follow clues left in various cities to find the most recent destination of the fugitive and follow his or her trail. In addition, you must gather pieces of information about the subject until you have enough to identify him or her, then plug that information into the crime lab computers to get a positive ID and an arrest warrant.

Each case begins in your office at Headquarters. The chief rings you and tells you a crime has been committed. Then you're off to some other city. In **WHERE IN EUROPE IS**

Crime Lab
Sun 6 pm

*** Luxembourg ***
Capital:
Luxembourg
Flag: Red, White and Blue
Currency: Franc
Language: French, German, English

CARMEN SANDIEGO? you must chase the criminals around various European countries.

The clues are usually in the form of information about the country the suspect is headed for. So the key to the game is knowing your geography. Since the object is to learn while having fun, the clues are generally not the kind of thing you automatically know. Information is obtained, in this case, from the Rand McNally Concise Atlas of Europe which is packaged with the game. Other games in the series use different reference works. In addition, the Crime Lab has a special computer that contains information on all the countries of Europe. For instance, if you know the colors of a flag, a type of currency, or a language spoken, you can get a printout (on screen) of possible countries based on those clues.

13 ▶

Red, White and Blue
Franc
French

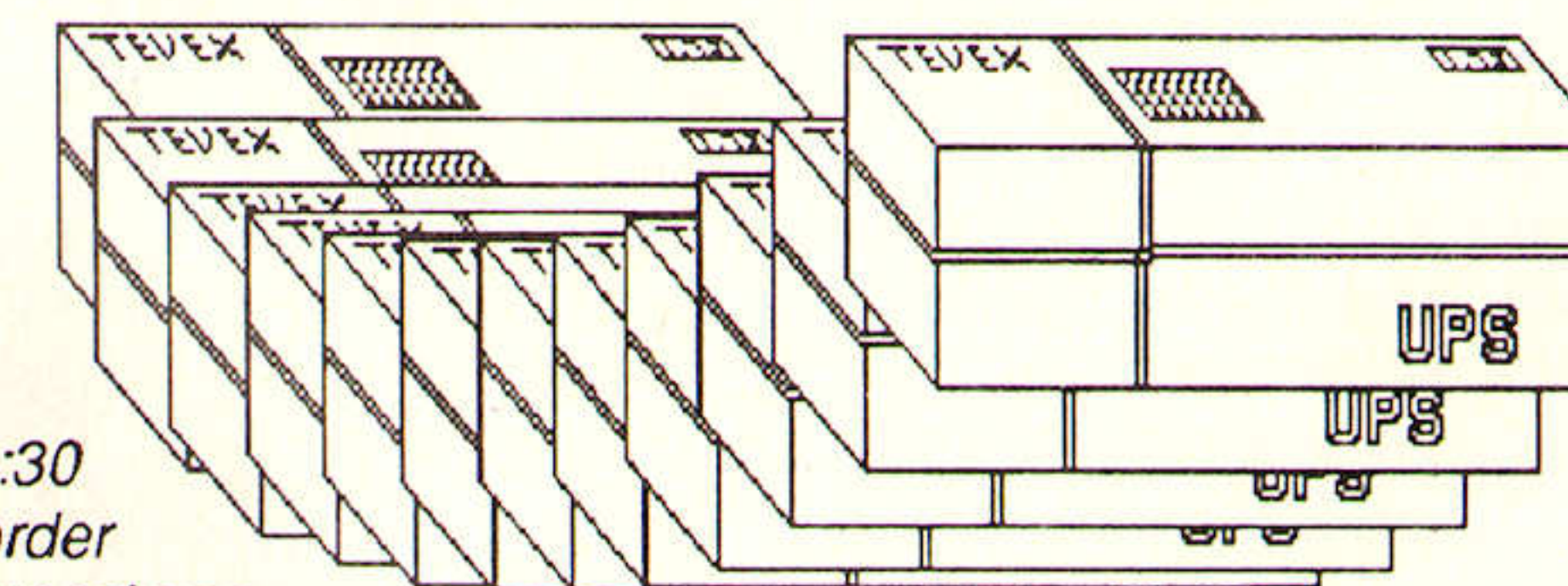
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The National Inquirer

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[See Page 2]

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SCRAMBLED

SON TRIES

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WITH EGGS!

[See Page 2]

**ALIEN
AMUSEMENT
PARK FOUND
ON MARS!**



[See Page 4]

◀ 8

interested in the game. On the other hand, the puzzles are sophisticated enough so that experienced players will still be able to spend dozens of hours figuring things out and eventually winning.

The premise of the game, the details and scenarios are original, interesting and definitely off-beat. And, back to the movie theme, the whole plot-line could have been lifted from one of George Lucas' movies: take a heroic figure and send him on a quest filled with danger and excitement, with him eventually winning out over evil and becoming the hero. Now I must admit that Zak wielding a loaf of French bread isn't quite the same as Luke Skywalker with his light saber but the idea is still the same.

On a technical level, the game is well put together. It responds very quickly to commands and scenes appear quickly also. All of the scenarios are displayed with a menu

beneath them containing commands you can use. By using the "what is" command, you can identify all of the objects in any scene and decide what to do. You must learn how to fit sentences together to make Zak do things efficiently, but that doesn't take long to master.

The graphics, as you would expect from the same company that produces so many computerized special effects for films, are great. Colors are sharp and the detail work is very well done. Even the box cover art is superb (as you can see from the cover of this magazine) having been done by renowned artist Steve Purcell.

The game is copyright protected in a rather unobtrusive way. There is an exit visa code book that you will need to use to allow Zak to make international plane flights. At the appropriate times, a code from this book must be typed in or Zak can't get on the plane, which effectively ends his mission.

Overall, we enjoyed playing **ZAK** and

recommend it to anyone with an interest in this genre of games. The uniqueness of the idea and the special features mentioned earlier will keep you entertained for many hours. Lucasfilm Games has pushed back the horizons for this type of game with **ZAK**. It's not a huge step but it's also not the last one, so we look forward to more and better things to come. In the meantime, **ZAK** will keep you occupied satisfactorily.

Circle Reader Service Number 99.

Name: ZAK McCracken AND THE ALIEN MINDBENDERS
Type: Adventure
Formats: IBM, Tandy, C64/128, Apple II
Publisher: Lucasfilm Games
Designers: David Fox, Matthew Kane, David Spangler, Ron Gilbert
Ages: 12 to adult
Players: one
Requirements: CGA/EGA card, mouse, joystick optional
Price: \$39.95, \$44.95

Ability Level: Beginner-Intermediate

Packaging: (8)

Documentation: (9)

Graphics/Text: (9)

Playability: (9)

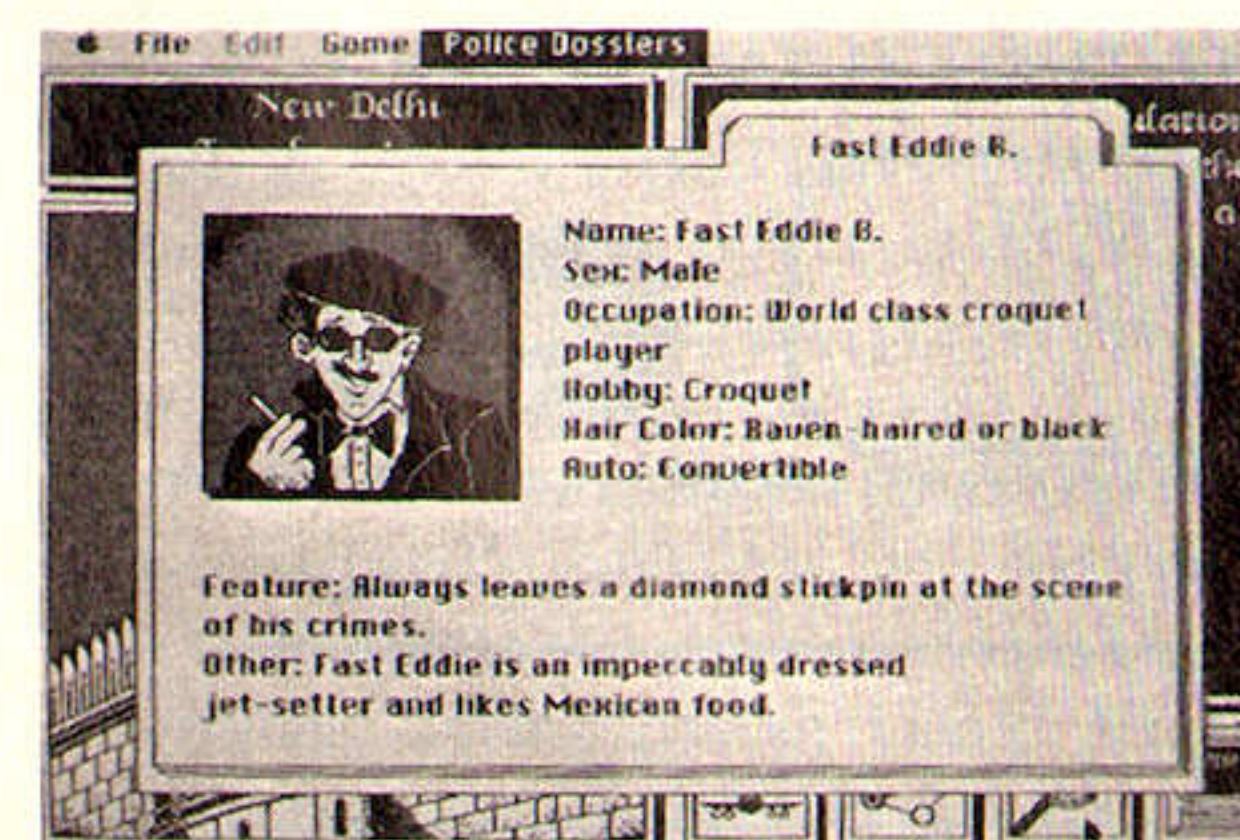
CP RATING: 8.90

◀ 10

Learning Can Be Fun

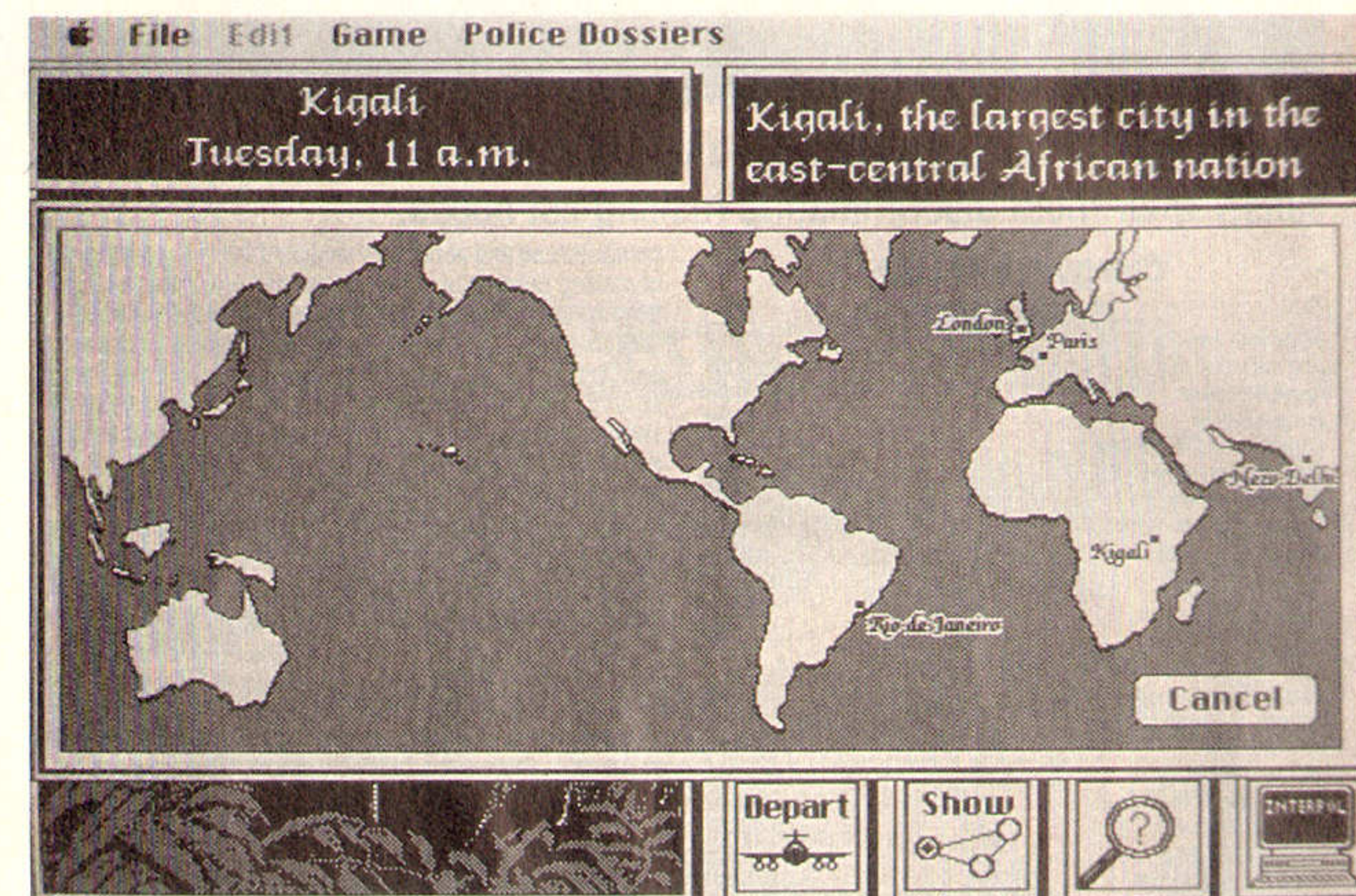
Games in the Carmen Sandiego series are fun to play. It is important to stress that fact since many people automatically equate learning something with unpleasantness. You are not tested later or asked to retain your knowledge (although some clues do repeat in altered form, reinforcing the information so that you learn in spite of yourself). But it is the ability to conduct research that is best cultivated by these games. Where ordinarily I don't like looking facts up in reference books — be they dictionaries, encyclopaedias, or the like — I don't mind looking up information for this game at all.

This game is not a realistic look at police work, but I've even seen real policemen play it, and they seem to enjoy this game despite its lack of real detail. Basically, in each city you can question a witness, search the scene, or call the anonymous "Tipster." Each activity takes some time to accomplish, and you must work efficiently. You have just



under a week to complete your mission. After that, the culprit goes free. Likewise, if you don't obtain a warrant before you catch up with your prey, they slip through the cracks of the legal system and walk.

As you learn new facts or infer new information about your suspect, you enter it into your Notebook. You can enter the sex, eye color, hair color, and the suspect's favorite type of movie and book. When you have gathered enough information about the thief to identify him or her from among all the



other members of Carmen's gang, the computer reports a positive ID and issues the warrant. From there on you must track the suspect, correctly interpreting the clues that will take you to each destination, and, eventually to the apprehension of the suspect.

For most adults, this is not too difficult a game, though it is still fun to play, but for kids of various ages, this game has enough color and mystery to keep them playing. It is also an excellent game for family activities or for sharing between adult and child. It is one of those rare opportunities to be teaching your children where they will be generally enthusiastic about learning. The graphics and sounds are well integrated in the game, the whole game is menu driven and easy to work with, and there is a good balance of information and entertainment throughout. For instance, when you are at the airport preparing to depart, you must select a destination city. A map of Europe shows your route as you select each city — thus reinforcing the player's geographic knowledge.

Virtue Is It's Own Reward?

As an added incentive, though you start as a lowly gumshoe, you can rise through the ranks of the Bureau by successfully completing cases. This gives an added incentive to play over and over. We all like promotions.

In the end, the criminal is brought up before the judge. If you have a warrant, he or

she is found guilty, you receive the Chief's congratulations, and it's on to the next case.

In all, **WHERE IN EUROPE IS CARMEN SANDIEGO?** is a worthy sequel to the other games in this series, and all of them are examples of the best of educational gaming. They are fun, colorful, and active; and though they are relatively simple, they are just challenging enough to make life interesting. Circle Reader Service Number 77.

Name: WHERE IN EUROPE IS CARMEN SANDIEGO?
Type: Educational Mystery
Format Reviewed: IBM PC
Publisher: Broderbund
Ages: 8 to adult

Players: one at a time 1 (but can be a team effort)

Requirements: IBM PC/XT/AT or compatible; CGA, EGA, or Hercules mono card (Also available in Apple II and Commodore 64/128 formats)

Price: \$44.95 (\$39.95 for Commodore version)

Ability Level: Intermediate

Packaging: Excellent (9.5)

Documentation: Very Good (8.5)

Graphics/Text: Very Good (8.5)

Playability: Excellent (9.5)

CP RATING: 9.1

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Be a 'Rad' and 'Bad' Punk Dude

By Rusel Demaria

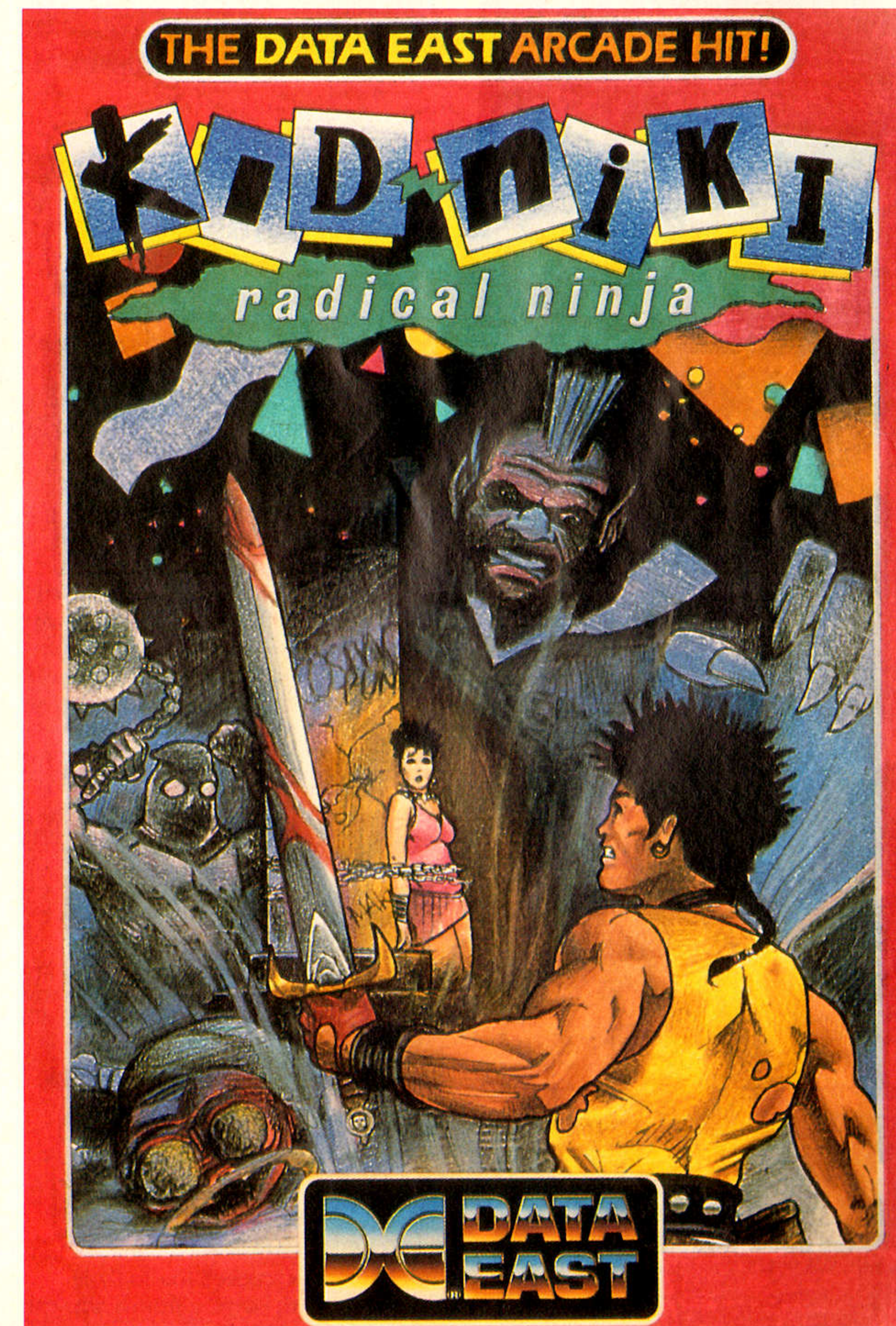
"As KID NIKI you are a 'rad' and 'bad' punk dude." So begins the brief manual for the Apple II version of the arcade game, KID NIKI. As KID NIKI, you have to cross a basically hostile landscape, using your spinning sword to dispatch the multitudes, and, eventually, save your "spike-haired girlfriend," Princess Margo. Along the way, you'll have to eliminate seven nasties who stand in your way.

Death Breath (who sounds like someone who should star in a mouthwash commercial) is your first challenge. A few whacks on his rear end, however, and you can proceed to the next level. Just don't get breathed on.

One saving grace of this program is that, once you have completed a level, you don't have to return to it during the same session. Mimicking the coin-op game, KID NIKI allows you to start from your current level if you should get killed. The game resets to the beginning when you turn off the computer or reboot, so I found myself leaving the game on pause and turning off the monitor over night — other obligations prevented me from completing it in one sitting. On the other hand, once you have figured out each nasty character's weakness, you should be able to complete the game fairly easily.

Anyway, having passed Death Breath, you go on to challenge Spike. On the coin-op game, Spike looks like a fairly tough customer, tossing his spiked ball at you and generally looking mean. On the Apple II version, he looks more like a toddler throwing a small beach ball at you. But looks can be deceiving. The ball kills.

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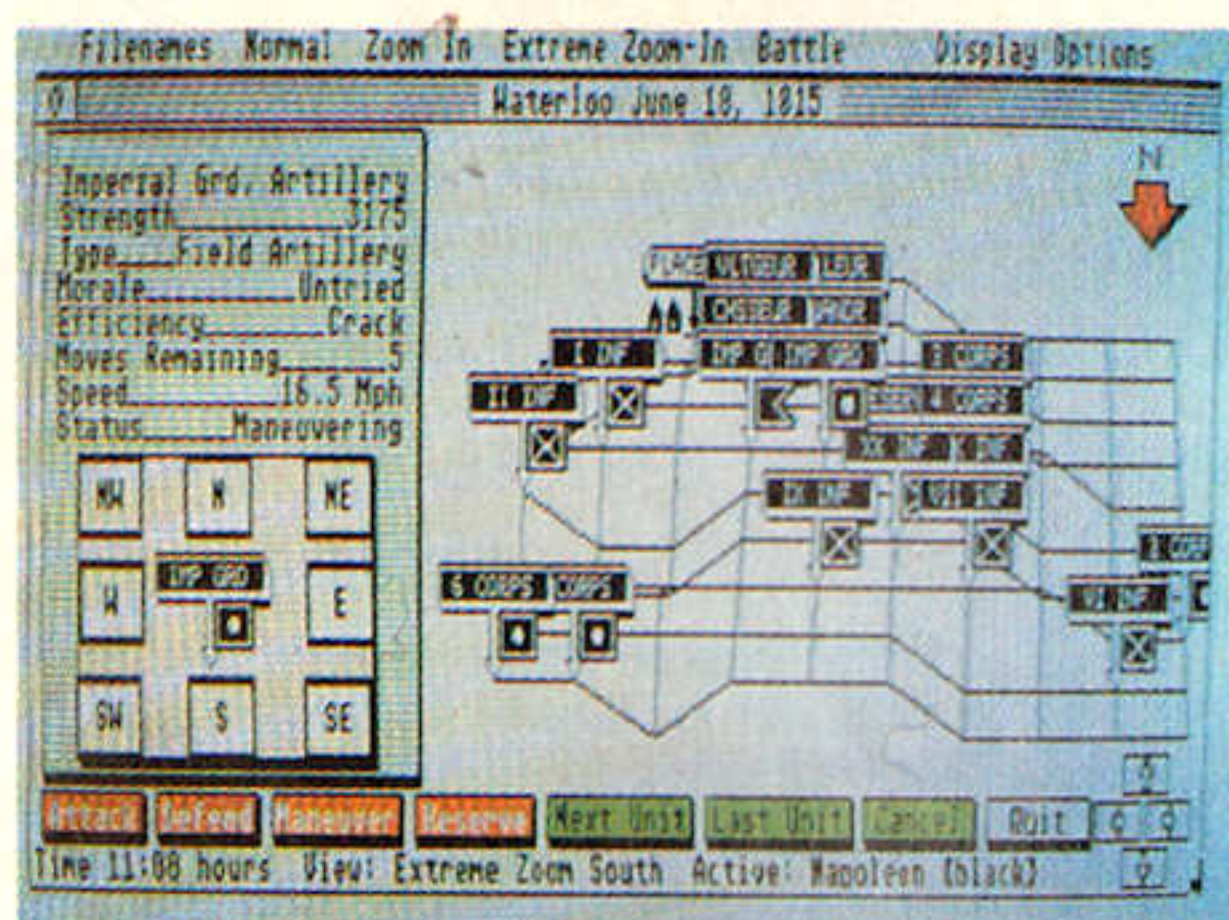


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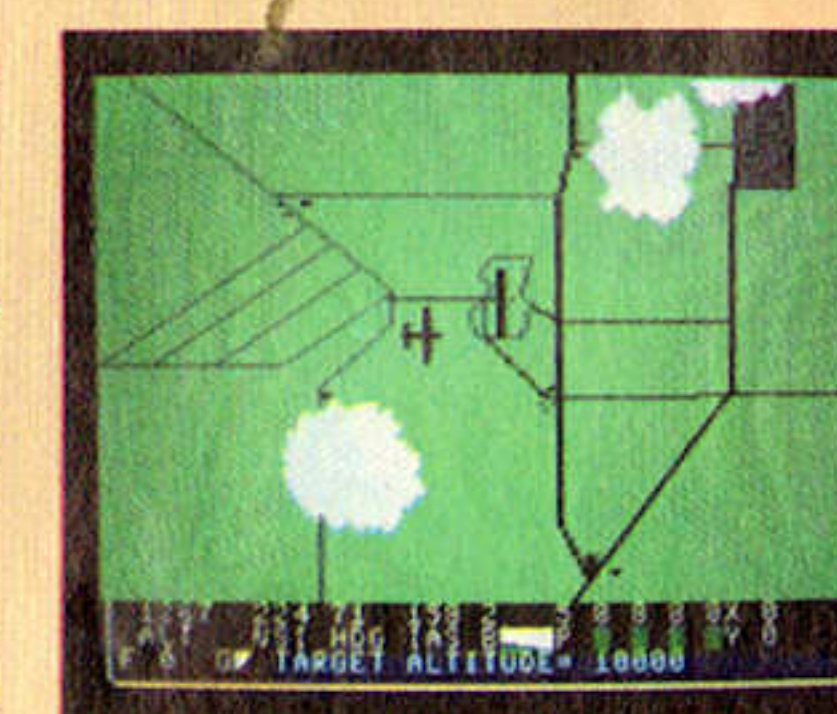
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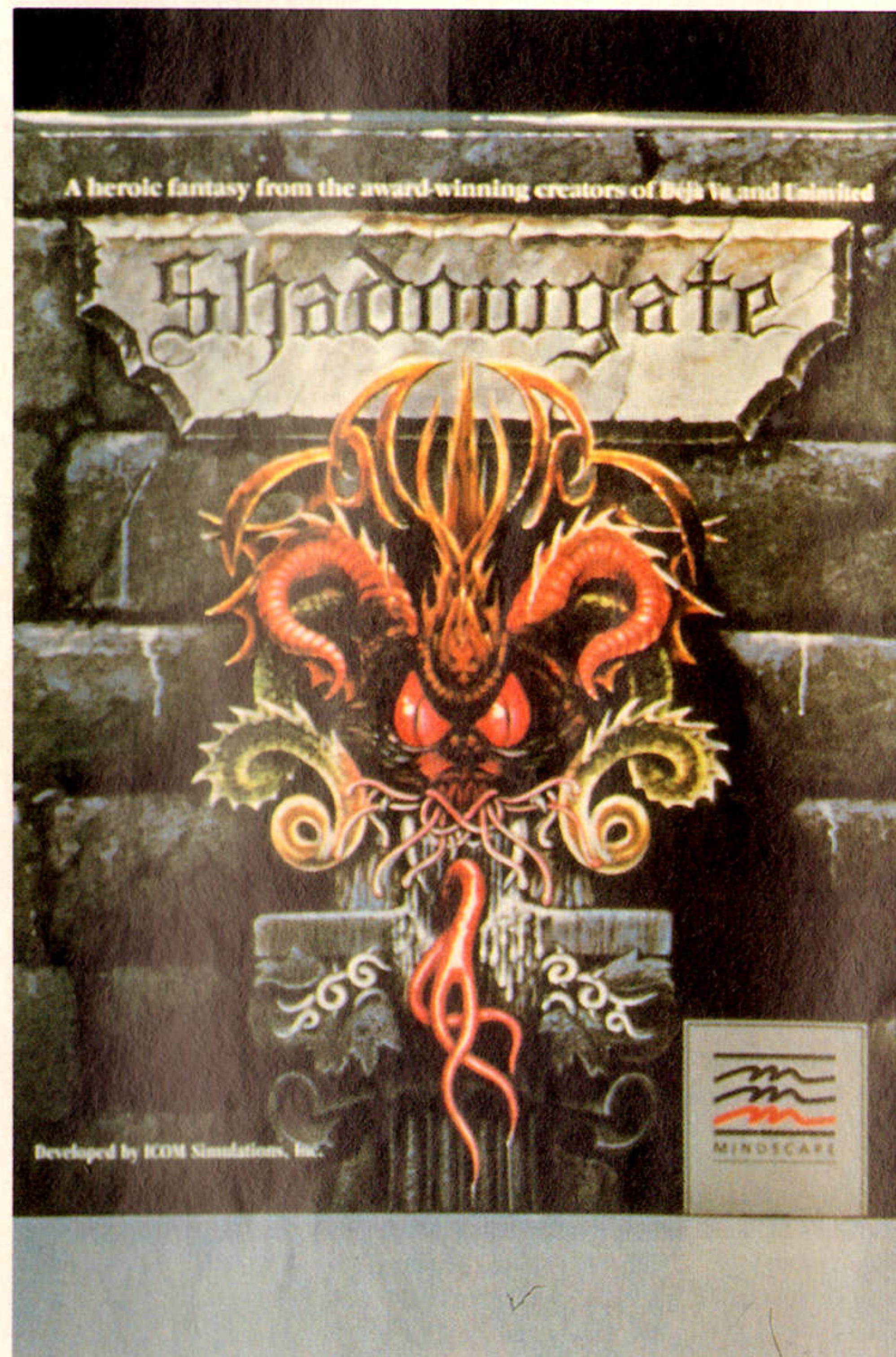
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Circle Reader Service Number 85.

A Fantasy Quest for Amiga



By Roy Wagner

The graphic adventure games DEJAVU, UNINVITED, and SHADOWGATE from ICOM and distributed by MindScape are very interesting "ports" (translations) to the Amiga and other computers. These games were first programmed and released for the Macintosh computer. As such they adhered to the Macintosh programming standards and used several windows for display and program options. The ports of these games have

stuck with the Macintosh appearance and operation. And this is good.

The game play is greatly simplified by using the "standard" mouse interface (that is also familiar to the Amiga user). Some things about the game are a bit "foreign" to the non-MAC owner but these are minimal. Many of the tedious and trial-and-error facets of other graphics adventures are lessened by the limited options in these games. In fact, the text entry option available in all three, and used in the first two, does not even need to be used in SHADOWGATE.

All actions are selected, using the mouse, from a command window listing a single word for each action. The words available are: Examine, Open, Close, Speak (using the text window), Operate, Go, Hit, and Consume. Of these, most of the time only Examine, Operate, and Open are used. What you generally do is click a command word, and then an item. This makes for quick and easy game play.

Other screen windows are used to display your current location, available exits, story text, your inventory, and one represents your game self. These windows can be resized and moved about the screen. When some items are OPENed, they will open another window on top of the other non-overlapping windows displayed. These and other windows can be closed by clicking the mouse in the upper left corner. Even on the Amiga, windows close in the same way that they close on the MAC by shrinking to nothing.

In the location window, you can click on various objects. If any object is highlighted by such action, then that object usually has some useful purpose. Some objects can be moved to other locations in the scene and some can be added to your own inventory by moving it from the scene to your inventory window. There is

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◀ 15

Seven Challenges

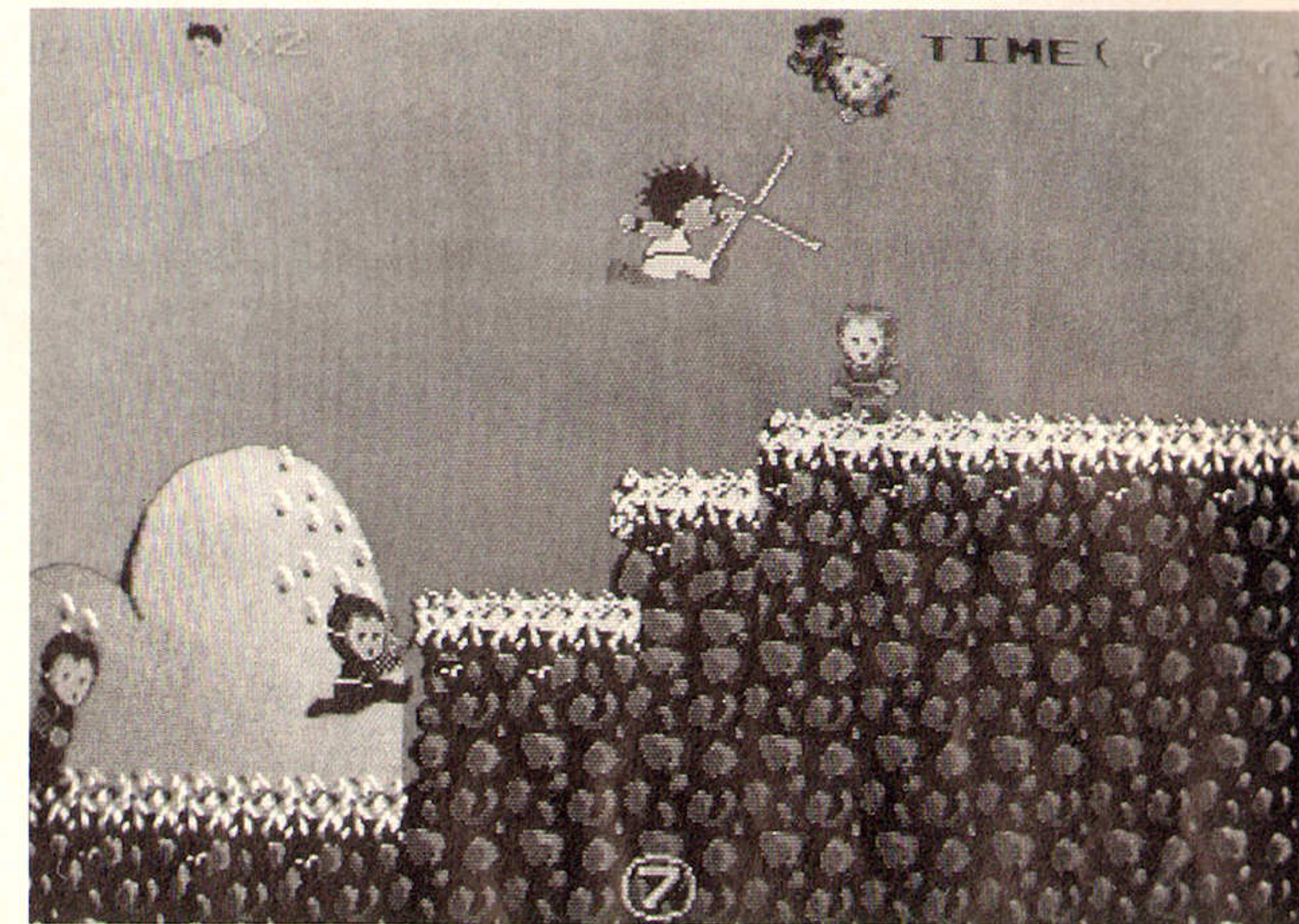
Each time you get past another of the seven challenges, you must cross another landscape full of obstacles and minor enemies. Other than your spinning sword, your only other weapon is your jumping ability. You are so adept at jumping, that you can even reverse direction in mid-air! Well, this is a game, folks. Anyway, the landscapes become progressively trickier, though they tend to be fairly simple to master. Unfortunately, each time you lose your three lives, you must return to the beginning of the current landscape and make your way back to the nasty who last killed you. After a while, the landscapes become more nuisance than challenge.

Anyway, after Spike you get a witch, the Grody Blue Grub, Baldy (who seems to be related to Death Breath), the Samurai Guard, and, finally, the Stone Wizard. The Stone Wizard is the creep who kidnapped the fair Princess Margo in the first place, and constitutes your greatest challenge, especially considering that, while you fight him, you have to avoid the princess who doesn't know enough to get out of the way.

Though killing the enemies and saving Margo is the goal of the game (it's nice to have goals, after all), it is also possible to rack up points by killing enemies and by doing it quickly. Various time bonuses are offered if you can finish a level within specified times. These bonuses can amount to hefty contributions to your score, if you are playing for points.

Playability

Though it can be played from the keyboard, this game is best played with a joy-



stick. The response of the game is very good, although it can be difficult to achieve the precise control necessary to vanquish some of the major enemies without bumping into them and getting killed. But, over all, the control factor of this game is good.

The graphics are adequate for the type of game it is, though they suffer when compared with the coin-op version. In some

games, graphic inferiority is a serious problem; in this game it is no big thing. One word of warning, however... The screen shots shown on the back of the box are from the coin-op arcade game. Some small print confirms that. Never should you suppose that the graphics on the Apple II will be anywhere near as good.

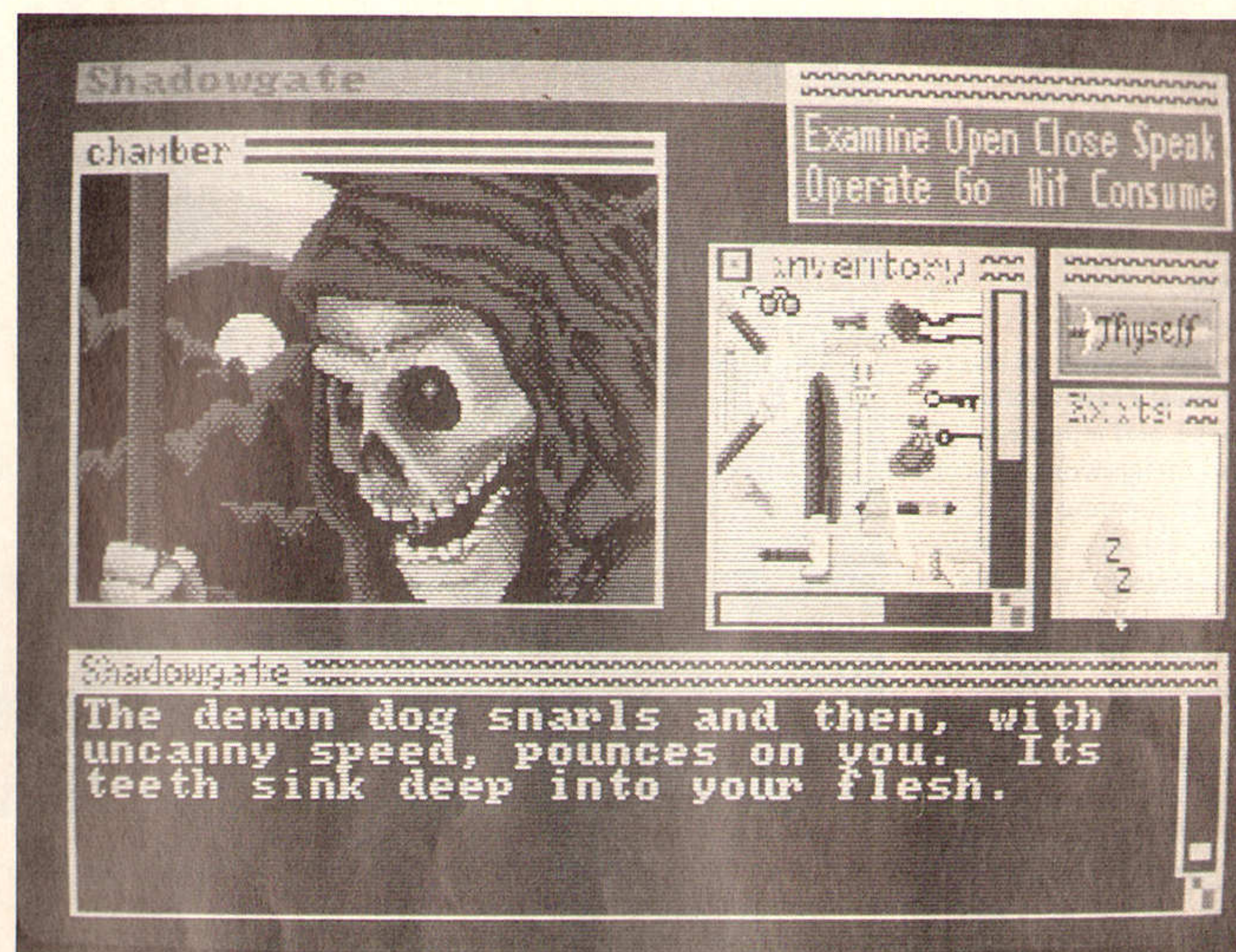
Is KID NIKI a real standout game? I would say no. It is fun, but doesn't really rise above the mass of games to call special attention to itself. It is a fairly simple game, and one that has almost no learning curve, though each level contains its challenges and complexities. Does it live up to the coin-op version? In other words, would fans of the coin-op feel satisfied with the micro version? I would say that most would be disappointed. It's pretty hard to go from a dedicated arcade machine to a micro environment and not lose something. KID NIKI loses less than some ports that I've seen, but it does lose. I'd say, if you like the quarter-eater version, you'll probably have to keep raiding the piggy bank.

Circle Reader Service Number 79.

Name: KID NIKI
Type: Arcade Action
Format Reviewed: Apple II
Publisher: Data East USA, Inc.
Ages: 6 to 16
Players: one at a time
Requirements: Apple II+, IIe, IIc, IIgs (in emulation) w/64K; 5.25 inch drive, joystick recommended
Price: \$34.95

Ability Level:	Easy to Intermediate
Packaging:	Average (6)
Documentation:	Adequate (6)
Graphics/Text:	Adequate (6)
Playability:	Good (7.5)

CP RATING: 6.75



◀ 18

a limit to how much can be carried, but you can open "container" objects and put more items in them.

Movement can be done by clicking in an exits window that shows known exits as a small square symbols, or clicking on obvious exits in the location window. Moving in this way is easy and it immediately brings us a new location display. Some exits are not shown without some prior action being taken to make their presence visible. In fact, a challenging part of each of these games is finding an exit when none are immediately apparent. This situation is encountered several times in each game.

Menu options are available to start a NEW game, OPEN a previously saved game, SAVE the current game, SAVE AS a newly named file, and to QUIT or "give up and go home" as the game says. When you die while playing, you are given the option the resume play again using a saved file.

All three of these games are challenging and each has its moments of frustration when you come up against some

pretty tough situations. They all have excellent sound files to add to the excitement and complement the good graphics. There are periodic animated sequences such as spiders walking a railing or a mouse crossing the room. Much of the text includes some funny tongue-in-cheek comments.

You need to read the text closely to get some very subtle clues to successfully deal with various "end-of-the-road" situations. With some thinking about what the text says and lots of trial and error (and lots of game saving) you should be able to complete each game. If you have put your printer driver on the game disk, you will actually be able to print a certificate that certifies that YOU have completed each game.

DEJA VU has a 1940's mystery theme with you assuming the role a hard boiled detective with amnesia that must solve a murder or be arrested for the crime. In UNINVITED you must search for your lost brother in a haunted house filled with demonic creatures. And SHADOWGATE is a heroic fantasy quest to defeat a warlock lord while outsmarting dragons, trolls

and other monsters. The user interface and game play gets better with each game. Hint sheets are available for each game for \$5.00. Unless you have some other sources of help, it is probably a good idea to order it before you get too far into the game.

Within the Walls of Shadowgate

As the game begins you find yourself standing before a closed doorway that provides entrance to the castle. A double click on the door in the location window or the square in the exit window, or a click on the command word OPEN and then the door, and it opens. A similar set of easy, quick actions and you enter the castle and proceed with the rest of your adventure. Well, let's get inside and begin the excitement. Not so fast! Did you thoroughly explore the outside before changing locations? If you didn't, then you missed finding a very important key. You need to do good job of checking every location before moving on.

You may have noticed that your inventory started out with a burning torch. In

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◀ 20

some games torches do burn out, and this is one of them. In fact it will burn out very soon if you don't get another one soon and light it. This is easily done by clicking on a new torch, and then clicking on the word OPERATE, then on the burning torch. Keeping a torch burning is one of the challenges in this game. Sometimes you will notice the screen flicker briefly before it goes out, other times a text message will mention it, but many times you will have no warning. There is no shortage of torches to be found, just make sure you always have a couple in your inventory and light another one after making a few moves.

As you now begin your explorations, you will find many different items. Try to get them into your inventory. Many are red-herrings, but you will need most of the items. Some, such as magic scrolls, will disappear once they are used. A few

items will need to be used more than once, especially the crystal sphere. Much of your activity now will be getting items and operating them on other objects.

As with all games of this kind, the SAVE option is very important. You will want to save it quite often. Death is ready to strike you down nearly everywhere you go. Another problem is that you will probably discover that you are missing an item that you left behind several moves back and you can only go back as far as you have a restore on disk. Definitely use a separate save disk. If you have a two drive system, put the save disk in the second drive.

Here are some general hints. Everywhere you go, you should EXAMINE, OPEN, and OPERATE everything. Read the text messages very closely for very subtle clues. It is very hard to pull any useful information from the messages that are meant to be clues in the game itself. If you remove anything from your inventory, do it somewhere convenient to get it back again if needed. Save, save, and SAVE AS different names quite often. And if per chance, you will have a problem lighting a torch, try lighting it while in the location window and then move it to your inventory window. Finally, buy a hint book or find a walk through, because even with it the game is tough, but a LOT less frustrating.

Just a little helpful advice to get you over the tougher parts of this game. The wall at the end of the hallway with the candles has a stone that can be moved. The ONLY text that you need to type in is the word "epor". The shabby bridge that you encounter early in the game can be crossed, but you can't be carrying much and you will need something magic that you find much later in your adventuring. The special torch can be used on the wraith. When you find the levers, you need to operate the third, second, and third one.

SHADOWGATE and the other ICOM games are well done, with an excellent user interface. They are tough but fun. The Amiga version does have some annoying, but very minor bugs when saving and restoring, and is maybe just a bit too much like the MAC. The added animations and realistic sounds that periodically come up while playing, add another dimension to their enjoyment.

Circle Reader Service Number 78.

Name: SHADOWGATE
Type: Fantasy/Adventure
Formats: Amiga, Mac, Atari ST
Publisher: Mindscape
Designers: ICOM
Ages: 12 to adult
Players: one at a time
Requirements: none special
Price: \$49.95

Ability Level:	Intermediate
Packaging:	Good (7)
Documentation:	Good (7)
Graphics/Text:	Good (7)
Playability:	Very Good (8)

CP RATING: 7.5

A Dungeon to Master

By John S. Manor

FTL Games has created a fascinating nether-world of dungeons, monsters and puzzles in **DUNGEON MASTER**, a role-playing game played in "real-time". "Real-time" means things happen around you even while you watch in wide-eyed wonder. The action is so life-like that you can easily forget you are playing a game. As you walk along the dungeon corridors, you strain to see around the next corner, not knowing what might be lurking there. It could be a horde of horrible monsters, or precious food and water. You must gather your courage, ready your weapons and move on.

At the start of the game, you enter the dungeon at the "Hall of Champions". The souls of twenty-four dead champions are trapped within mirrors hung on the walls. You examine their attributes and choose up to four of them to be in your party. The four basic types of champion are 'Fighter', 'Ninja', 'Wizard', and 'Priest'. Each of them has many levels of ability, from 'Neophyte' and 'Novice' to 'Master' and beyond. The higher the champion's level the better fighter he is, or the more potent his spell casting. You can choose to either resurrect or reincarnate a champion. Resurrection brings him back to life with his skills and knowledge intact. Reincarnation leaves him with no special skills or knowledge, but he will be physically stronger.

Pictures of your champions are located on top of the main screen. All actions in **DUNGEON MASTER** are controlled by the mouse. Click your mouse on a champion and a graphic inventory of the items he is carrying appears. A sword might be shown in one of his hands, a torch in the other and several objects in his backpack. Each champion can carry a number of objects, depending on how strong he is.

With your party of champions you descend the stairs to the second dungeon level. Your journey will be ever downward until you reach your final goal; to find the 'Firestaff' with which the evil wizard 'Chaos' may be defeated. Along the way you will find useful objects. You can pick up objects

with a hand-shaped cursor and examine them. Some can be thrown or used as weapons.

You will need to find both food and water to keep your champions healthy. The food

and water levels for each champion are shown by colored bars. Check them regularly. Your party can die of thirst or starvation, or become too weak to fight effectively.

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The Blockbuster Legend

By Rusel Demaria

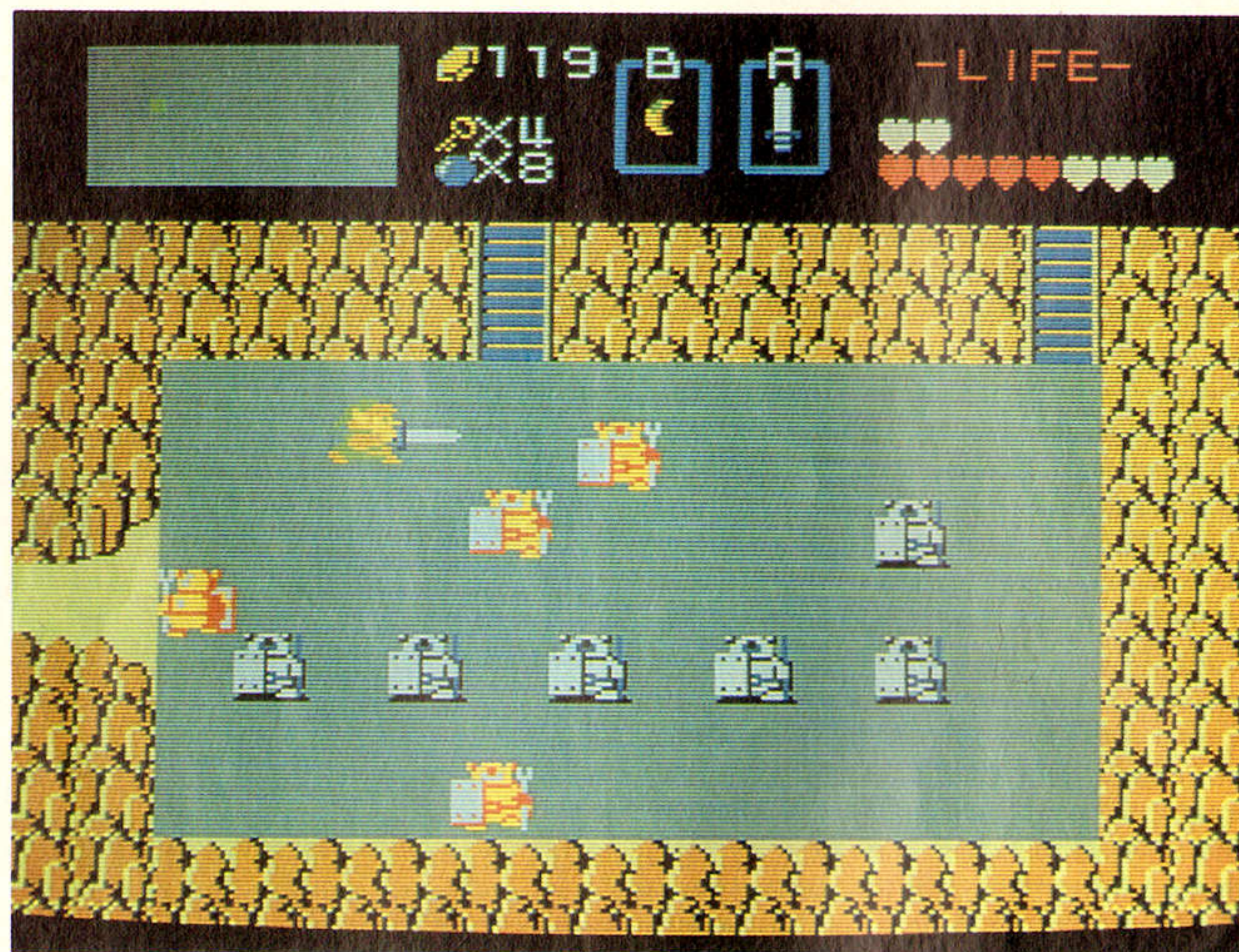
"OK, Link. Here's what I want you to do. Go out into the Overworld, a pretty unfriendly place, and explore. Fight the monsters you will find there. Find each of the nine dungeons and defeat the hordes of monsters that reside in them. Defeat the protector monster in each dungeon and assemble the eight missing fragments of the powerful Triforce, a golden triangle that used to keep peace in the land. I can give you this puny shield, and you can get a wooden sword once you get there. After that, you're on your own. You have to take the completed Triforce and challenge the evil Ganon who has kidnapped the fair Princess Zelda and taken her to Death Mountain. You won't have a chance against Ganon (or most of his legions, for that matter) unless you find some better armament and protection. Fortunately for you, there are some nifty items hidden here and there — if you can find them."

So I imagine the King (Zelda's father) instructing Link as he sets out on his quest.

"Oh, by the way, Link," adds the King. "I want you to do it twice!"

Anyway, that's how I imagine the **LEGEND OF ZELDA** might begin. The **LEGEND OF ZELDA** is Nintendo's blockbuster hit role-playing adventure for their Entertainment System, and one of the most compelling and enjoyable home arcade games I've ever played.

Link is just a boy, and his task is pretty daunting, but for game players, this is a challenge that must be met. There are hidden rooms all over the place, and useful items of all kinds. There's a power bracelet that you must have to move boulders (some of which hide special rooms). There are candles that can light up dark rooms and, incidentally, burn some bushes which also hide special places. And there are better swords and shields, protective rings, boomerangs, and even a magic wand of great power. Oh, and I can't forget the magic whistle. Part of the fun of this game is finding these items and



watching Link become more and more powerful and invincible.

You Gotta Have Heart

Link's life force is measured in hearts, and he starts with three. However, he can find new heart containers in various parts of the game, and if he finds them all, he will have many hearts. Each time Link is hit by an enemy, part or all of a heart is destroyed. Therefore, the more hearts he has, the longer he will last.

If all of Link's hearts are red (meaning that his life force is intact), his sword will shoot long-range beams from its tip. This allows him to fight from a distance. But once any heart is damaged, the sword becomes ordinary again and Link must be near an enemy to use it. Once all the hearts turn white, Link dies (but fortunately can continue where he left off the last time the game was saved — more on that later). Fairies can restore hearts, and special fairies, found in enchanted lakes, can restore

all hearts at one time.

Other weapons you may find are more or less effective. Candles will burn some enemies, but do nothing to others. Boomerangs kill the weakest creatures, but simply immobilize most creatures temporarily. The wand will do damage to most creatures, as will the bow and arrows (though arrows cost one rupee each). Rupees are found here and there, sometimes when an enemy is killed, sometimes in other places.

You control the sword with the A button on the controller. The B button is used for a variety of other items ranging from a letter you must deliver at one point in the game, to secondary weapons like the boomerangs, bombs, and magic wand.

The Hidden

What makes this game really exceptional is its depth and variety. There are hidden features throughout. In fact, the programmers of this game worked

30

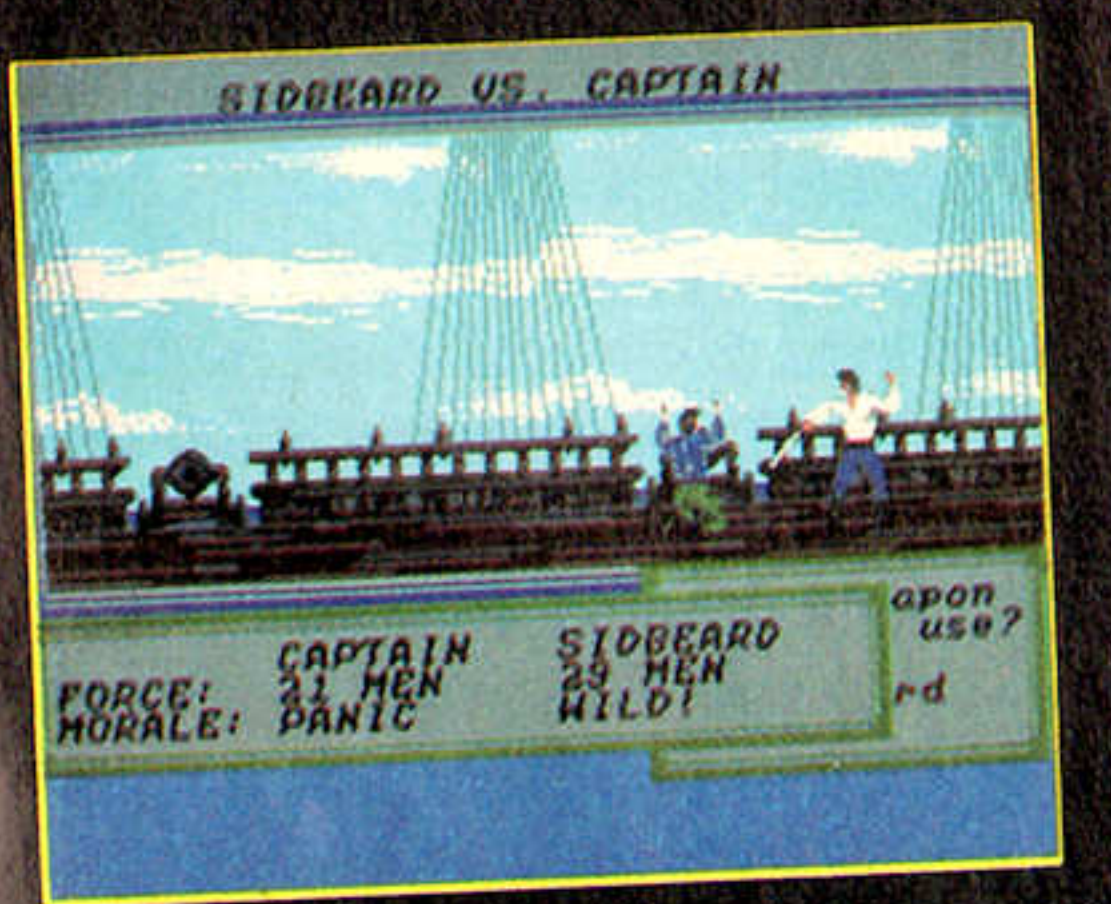
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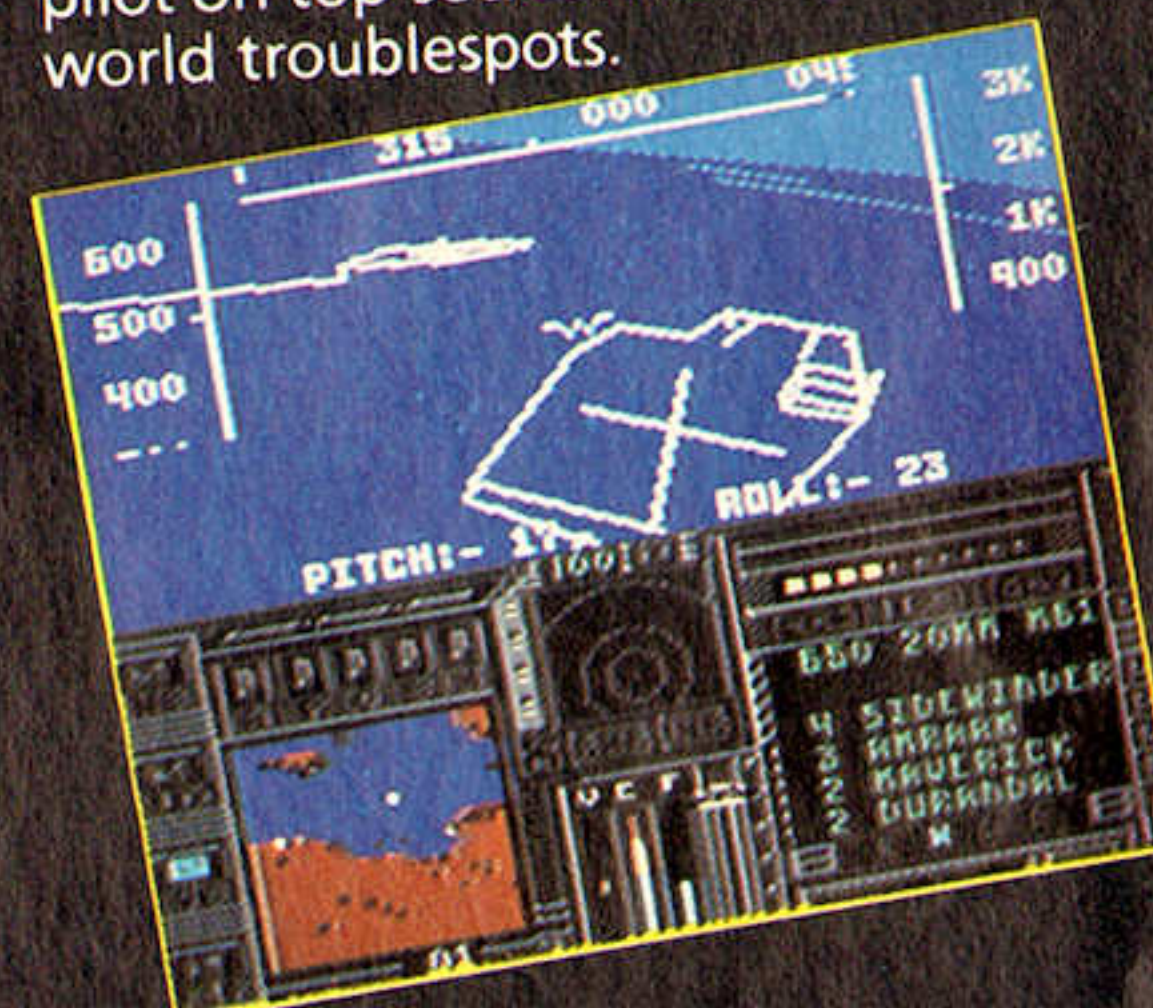
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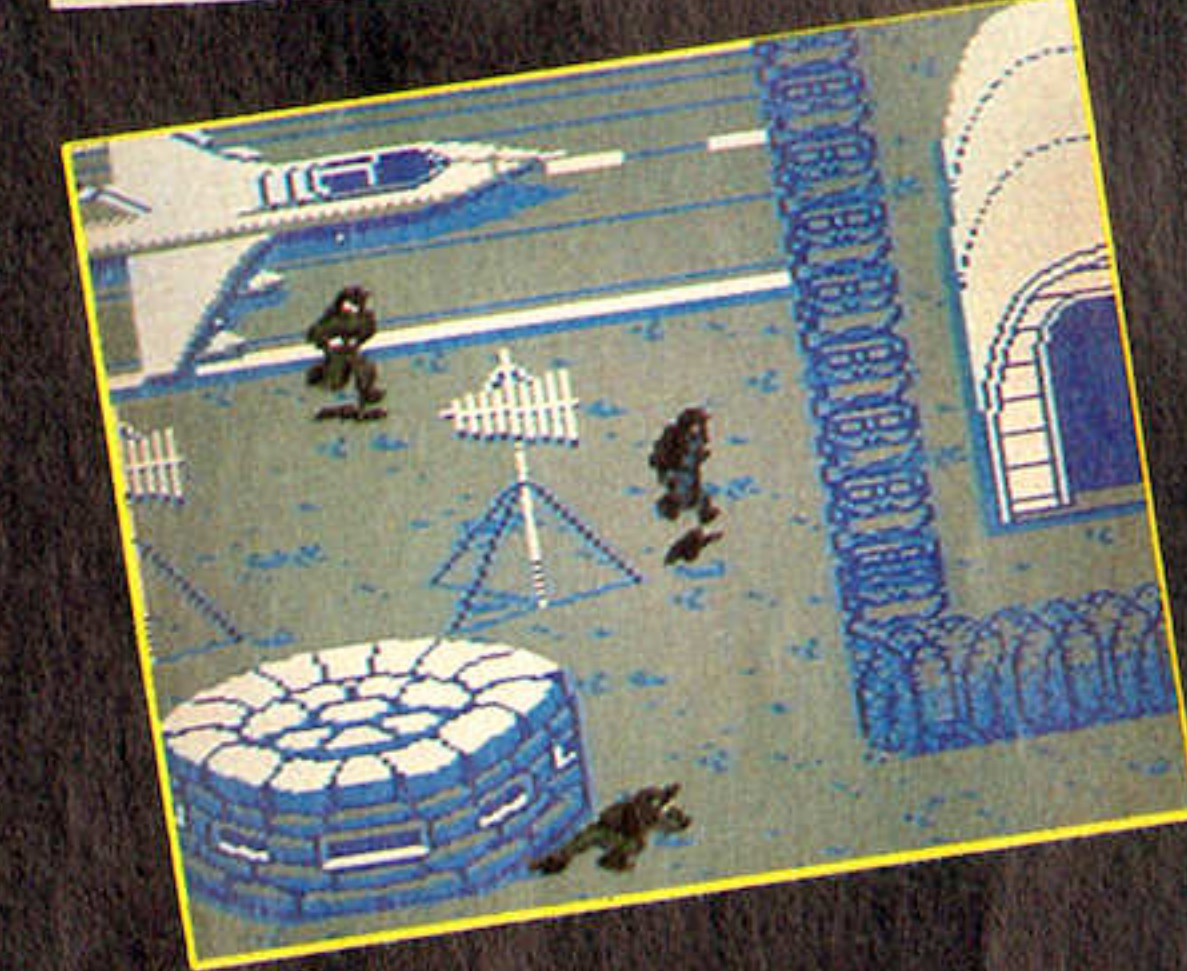
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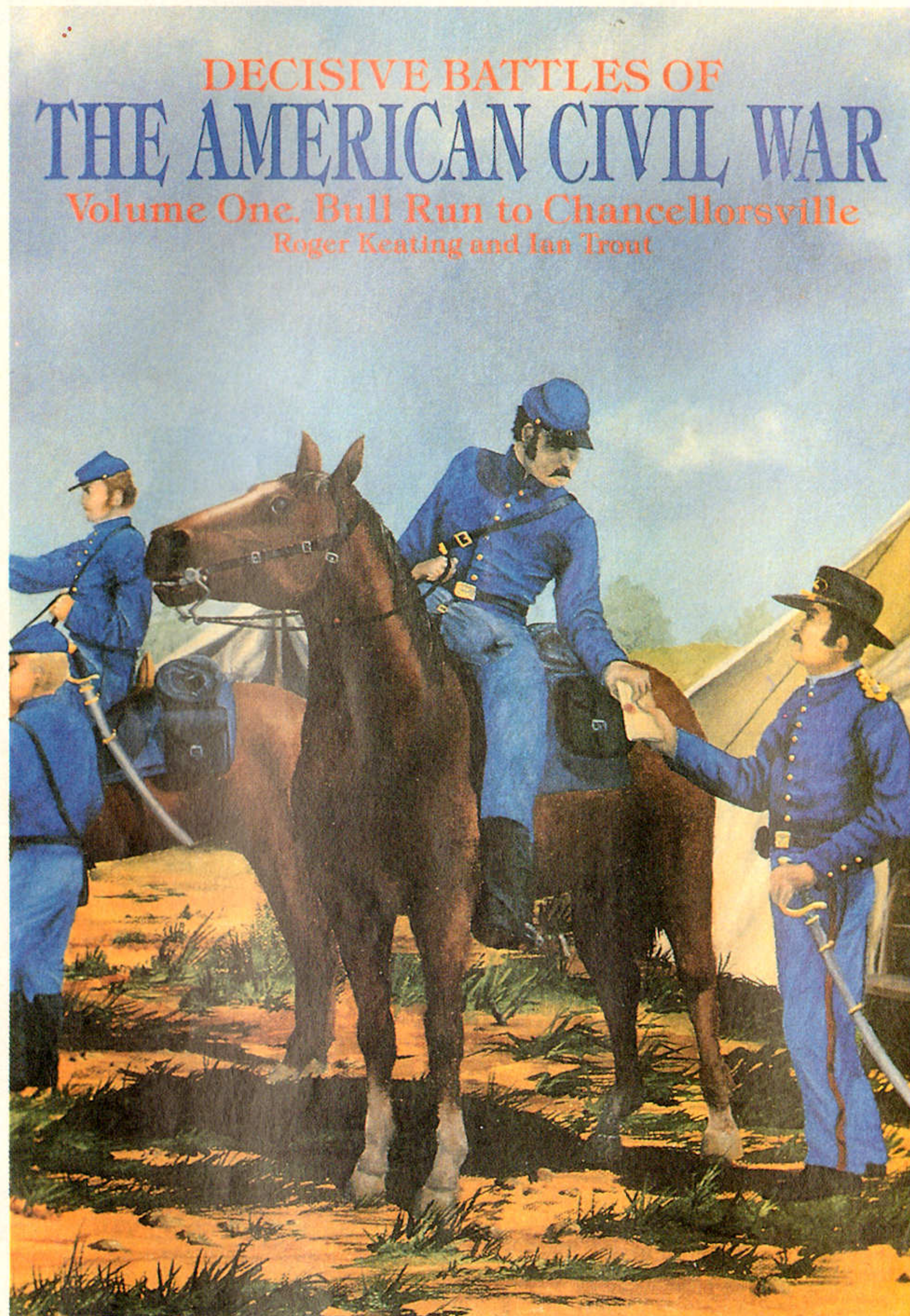
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The Civil War in Three Parts



By Jim Fink

With the introduction of **DECISIVE BATTLES OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR** we are presented with a mature, carefully thought out, well executed game system capable of faithfully representing the nature

of 19th century warfare, replete with all the problems of bad communication, limited knowledge of the enemy, and disastrously poor command control.

As a product, **DECISIVE BATTLES** is so unusual it is difficult to review using conventional techniques. It is, in fact, three products; a traditional board wargame, a true

computer simulation, and most interestingly, a simulation building tool that allows the user to modify most of the basic parameters of the simulation to his own preference. Consequently, the central part of this review is structured in the same manner.

Components

A brief description of the components, which are applicable to all levels of the product, is in order. You get a diskette, a comprehensive 72 page rule book, two menu cards (covered with plastic for easy cleaning of the occasional coffee spill) that summarize the communication required with the game, and a map, also covered in plastic, showing the 6 battlefields whose scenarios are included. The scenarios that come with the game are 1st and 2nd Bull Run, Shiloh, Antietam, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville. All components are of the highest quality.

In a departure from prior SSG products, the rule book not only describes the mechanics of playing the game, but also contains the major algorithms that control the game, and the map is printed on a large foldable paper rather than on small cards, (another change, and I preferred the cards). The algorithms are interesting from the standpoint of determining why certain events happen (or don't happen, but knowledge of them is not required to play the scenarios).

Control Options

Briefly, **DECISIVE BATTLES OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR** allows the player to control;

- How many "human" players there will be, one, two or none.
- Which army(s) will be under computer command and which under the players
- Whether friendly units will be visible (Exposed is the droll term for this state) or hidden to distant enemy units.
- Whether computer controlled forces will be given extra combat strength, and command bonuses to

make them a more worthy opponent.

- Whether army commanders will be able to give orders to all units as if they had a radio contact, or be limited to ordering only those in close proximity to the army headquarters.
- Whether to allow point handicaps to one side or the other when determining scores.

Standard Rules

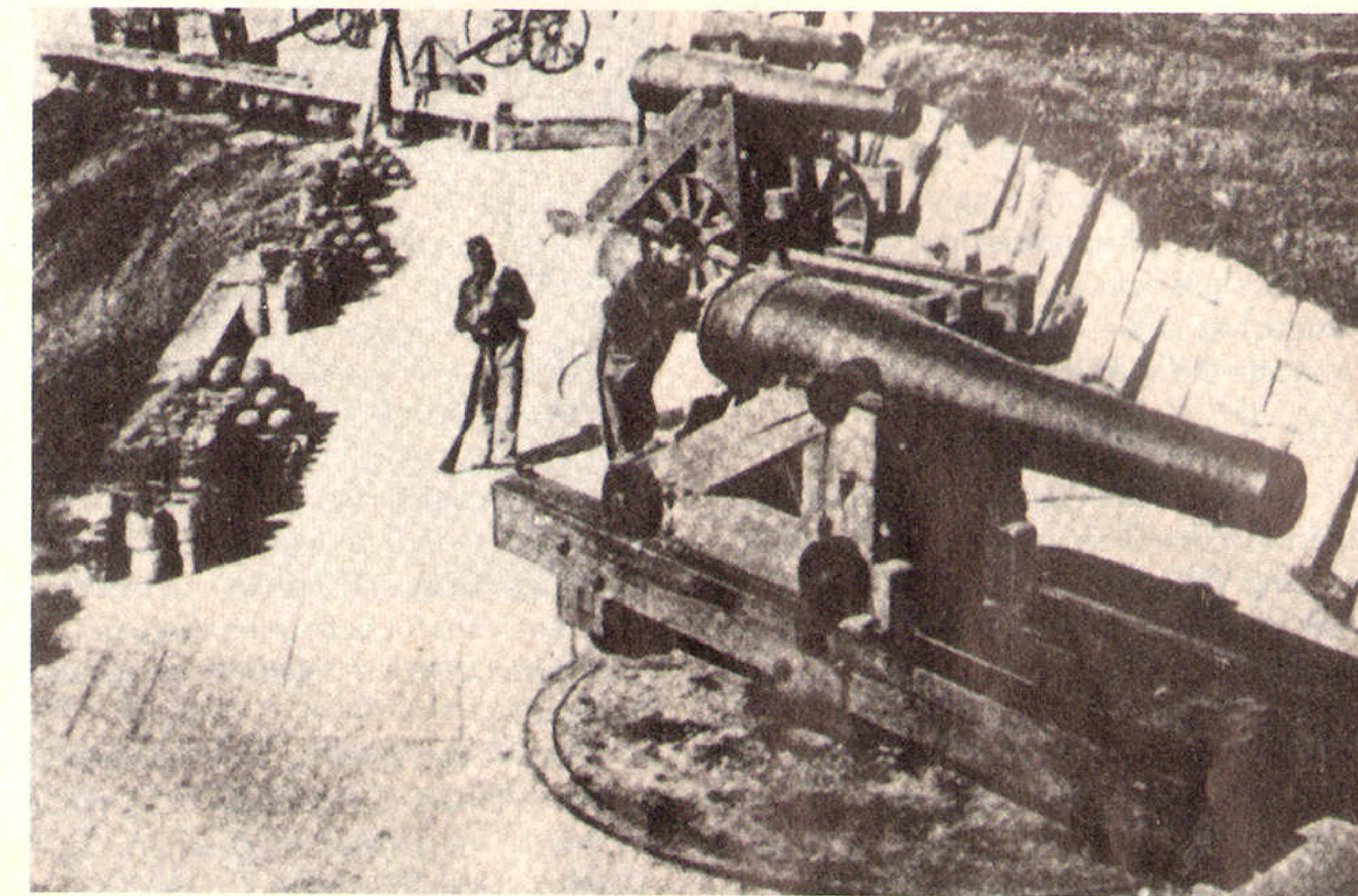
In brief, both sides issue orders for fire and movement for a one hour period in ignorance of the other sides' orders. Once orders are issued, the computer executes those orders interactively, and reports on the results as appropriate.

Regardless of the control options chosen, certain conditions always apply. You are always able to examine the map, determine the status of your combat units, and evaluate your own sides current score. Moreover, as player, you can control the personal influence your army commander will have on the game by allowing him to be "heroic", "bold", "sensible", or "cautious". Heroism gains combat bonuses for units in the immediate vicinity of the army headquarters at the increased risk of losing contact with the rest of the army and of the big fool getting his head blown off.

The presence of a player is symbolized on the map by the army headquarters symbol. Placement of the headquarters can have a major effect on the outcome of the simulations game, and affects all levels of play.

The maneuver unit of the game is the brigade. Corps and divisions exist as administrative units to which you give orders which are then passed down (you hope) to brigade level.

You direct your army in one of two modes. "Commands" are issued to superior units (corps, divisions) which are too distant from your headquarters for you to exert direct control. Commands are general in nature, e.g. "offensive", "defensive", "reserve", and once given remain in effect until superseded by another command. "Orders" are issued to units of any size in close proximity



to army Headquarters, and are more local in effect than commands, e.g. "deploy", "stand", "regroup". Units that are given direct orders from the army headquarters will obey them, but for one turn only. Be warned that on the following turn, the unit will return to control of its ordinary superior formation, unless army HQ explicitly takes over control again.

Tactically, in any combat situation, there exist a set of rules which determine who shoots first. The tactical object of the game is to always fire first, as this is a significant advantage. Units fired upon by more than one unit can be enfiladed causing additional penalties.

At any time, you may save the game on a diskette for play at another time, or for play-by-mail play.

The Board Game

If you have chosen the "Exposed" and "Radio" control options you are presented with a game that is in essence a traditional board game with many of the administrative chores taken over by the computer. You will be able to see all your forces and examine their strength. You will also be able to see where your opponents forces are, but not how strong they are. You can issue commands and orders to all your units every turn.

I call playing **DECISIVE BATTLES OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR** with these options the "board game" because the player has exhaustive information about both sides, and complete control of his army. It is the electronic equivalent of being able to pick up a cardboard counter and move it. The value that the computer adds in this mode is that you are guaranteed that all moves and combat results are made within the rules of the game.

The Simulation

Playing without the "Exposed" and "Radio" options makes an excellent simulation of 19th Century warfare. You will only see enemy units when they are close enough to be seen - by then it is often too late to react effectively, especially in dense terrain. Consequently, you can be surprised both tactically (one of your brigades in column marches straight into the Stonewall brigade deployed in line on a ridge and is shattered without firing a shot) and strategically (Jackson himself secretly marches I Corps to your flank, and proceeds to smite you, hip and thigh).

Commands and orders are issued only to units close by the army HQ. The further away a unit is the less likely it is that you will

move your HQ, you will give up control of many of the units you currently control. The simulating extracts a heavy penalty to "to"ing and "fro"ing.

Playing the simulation mode is in some respects the most unforgiving mode play of **DECISIVE BATTLES OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR**, but surprisingly, it is the least demanding of the players time. The number of decisions you have to make are quite limited, as is the information you have to evaluate the situation.

The Simulation Tool

The American Civil War is far and away the most controversial of America's wars, including Vietnam. The library of Congress lists over sixty thousand book titles on the subject. It was the first war where generals in the field were in constant telegraphic communication with their respective governments, and in which systematic maintenance of records was undertaken by both sides. Moreover, at the fall of Richmond, largely successful efforts were made to capture the Confederate archives intact. Generations of historians have had the chance to interpret and reinterpret this wealth of material.

As a consequence, no simulation or game is going to satisfy everyone. Those with historical background will argue that this or that commander was badly over or underrated. Those who are seeking a good game with evenly matched sides will find that with the material superiority of the Union, it is often hard to give the Confederates a chance to win without coming up with some tortured contrivance.

The scenarios provided with **DECISIVE BATTLES OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR** are not immune from some of these problems. If you have even a passing knowledge of the battles, you will be disappointed to see important landmarks missing from the map (e.g. no "Hornets Nest" at Skiloh, no "Corn Field" at Antietam.) But...

The genius of **DECISIVE BATTLES OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR** is that it gives each owner the opportunity to modify, and more importantly re-modify, the underlying parameters of the game/simulation in such a way that owner redesigns fundamental aspects of the product to suit himself. I am not talking about "difficulty levels" here (those are also present) but serious design issues.

SSG presents with this game two utilities

- Warplan and Warpaint. These utilities can be used to modify the supplied scenarios, or create entirely new ones. Warplan allows the user to control literally hundreds of parameters such as the number of turns in the game, the point structure, the strength of each individual brigade and the quality of its leadership, the quality of each brigade on the march and in battle. Moreover, Warplan allows you to modify or completely create your own map. Repairing the oversight of the Corn Field was a trivial exercise.

Warpaint allows you to modify or create the map icons to suit yourself. If you don't like the way fortifications are represented on the map, then change them. If you decide that there should be two kinds of fortifications, e.g. hasty, and dug-in, you can create different icons for both using Warpaint, and give them different defensive values using Warplan.

To give you a feeling for the ease of use of these utilities, it took me about 30 minutes to modify the 1st Bull Run scenario by expanding the number of turns from 14 to 95, and changing the point structure of some of the objectives. To test these modifications, I ran the resulting scenario 10- times having the computer play both sides. Results indicated that I had overcompensated with the pointstructure and a 3 minute change rectified this error. With another 30 minutes, I used this modified scenario as a basis for 3 other modifications allowing night fighting and with more restructuring of the point structure. Thus at the end of about 60 minutes effort I had four new games to play. The implications of this are staggering.

Moreover, these two utilities, Warplan and Warpaint are also used in other SSG products, namely their Battlefront series. Thus, the time spent in learning to use them is directly transferable to a large variety of products. As a final bonus, you are even able to transfer icons created in one game to another, so you don't have to be bothered keying them in twice.

It is important to note that the subtitle of **DECISIVE BATTLES OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR** is Volume I. The clear implication is that there will be follow on products using the same or an improved version of the system. Two new scenarios "Corinth" and "South Mountain" have already appeared in the SSG house organ (*ed.; a publication used for the express purpose of promoting products from one company, often owned by that company*), Run 5.

I feel that it is necessary to point out the SSG has a history of offering substantial improvements in their product. The Battlefield series is now in the fourth generation. What is truly remarkable about these improvements is that they are (in computer talk) "upwardly compatible". If you own the first in the series, you can play in incorporating the improvements of the last. Creating improved software with this capability takes immense skill - commercial software products selling for tens and even hundreds of thousands of dollars are usually unable to provide this feature! Hopefully, the same philosophy will apply to improvements in Decisive Battles.)

Conclusion

If you have any interest at all in the Civil War, this product is simply a must to own. It will satisfy your taste regardless of whether you prefer board games or simulations, and if it doesn't with surprisingly little effort, you can change the product until it does. You couldn't spend your hard-earned dollar on a better value.

Circle Reader Service Number 98.

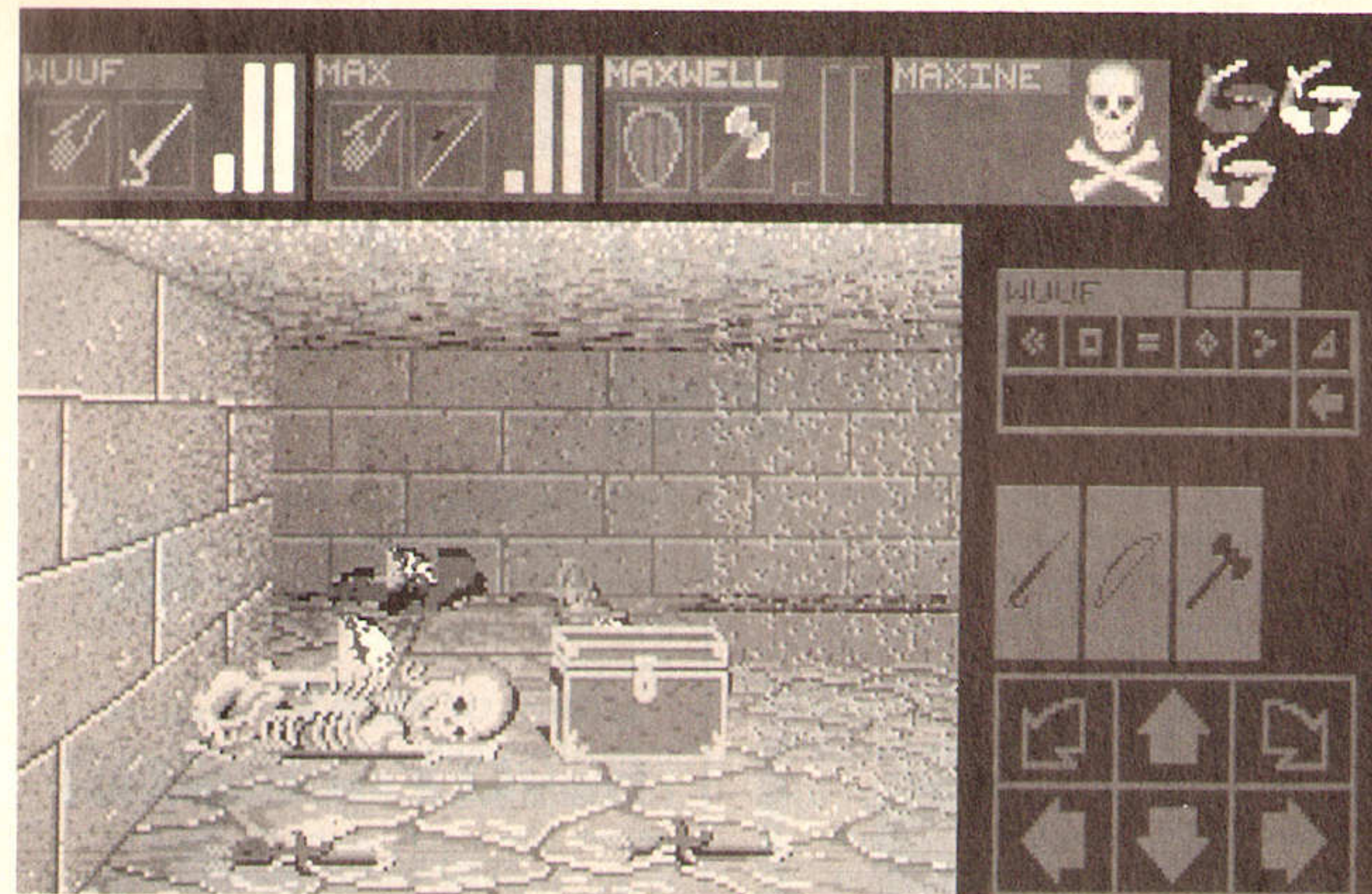
THE AUTHOR

Jim Fink is President of Executive Access, a database consultancy in Sudbury, Massachusetts. Jim has been a wargamer for 25 years, and has designed and programmed professional military simulation software.

Name: **DECISIVE BATTLES OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR, VOL. 1**
Type: Strategy
Formats: C64/128, Apple II Family
Publisher: Strategic Studies Group
Distributor: Electronic Arts
Designer: Roger Keating, Ian Trout, et. al.
Ages: 14 and up
Players: 1-2
Requirements: None
Price: \$

Ability Level:	Excellent
Packaging:	Excellent (9)
Documentation:	Average (9)
Graphics/Text:	Average (6)
Playability:	Excellent (9)

CP RATING: 8.4



You will be surprised where you will find food sometimes.

Some of your champions may come with weapons. You will find other weapons lying around or hidden. Look for long-range weapons. They allow you to kill at a distance without getting hurt, most of the time. The more your champions practice with their weapons, the better fighters they become.

Having champions who can quickly cast powerful spells is essential to reaching the lower dungeons. Priests can make healing potions and protect the party with magic shields. Wizards can cast fireballs, deadly gas clouds and other spells.

Spellcasting is based on 'Mana', a mystical form of energy. The more 'Mana' your champion has, the stronger his spells will be. Spells are cast by using combination for syllables, represented by magical symbols. You must find out what combinations of syllables cast spells. Scrolls found in the dungeon will give you some spells. Others can be figured out by reading the section on magic in the manual.

You can see the effects of the spells you cast as fireballs fly down the hallway in mid-air and gas clouds consume otherwise nearly

indestructible monsters. I have found some spells backfire in small rooms, often with lethal effects. As with normal weapons, the more your champions practice casting spells, the more skillful they will become.

There are many dungeon levels in **DUNGEON MASTER**. I have reached to about the fifth level. There is a large room with a number of side rooms off it. A sign reads "Choose your gate, choose your fate". Each room has puzzles and traps to solve. Many of them can be figured out with a little logic and trial and error. Others will really make you think. A little common-sense will help you navigate this tough and dangerous fantasy world.

Animated monsters will be waiting to ambush your party, even as you try to reason out your latest puzzle. Gargoyles swing clubs and rock squids leap up at you. Your champions will have to use their best weapons and most powerful spells to defeat them. Monsters will pursue your party if you retreat. It is always a good idea to have a safe haven to run to in case you are overwhelmed. Experience in dungeon-fighting will gradually make you wiser in knowing whether to fight or flee.

The graphics in **DUNGEON MASTER** make it the best role-playing game I have ever played. The dungeons stretch out around you in all directions. The walls look like substantial stone blocks and the monsters appear all too real. The game is designed so that even the smallest details can mean finding a hidden room with a cache of food or that one object you need to solve a puzzle. A recessed switch could also trigger a deadly trap.

I have spend many five or six hour sessions pleasantly engrossed in the graphic mazes of

DUNGEON MASTER. The real world ceases to exist and all that matters is how I will defend against the horrors waiting for me on the next level. I tell my wife I managed to resurrect Linflas or that Boris gained a wizard level and it's as if I'm talking about real people. I will be sorry when I finally finish the game. Fortunately **FTL** is bringing out a mini-adventure for registered owners of **DUNGEON MASTER**. It will work with the original game disk. You will also be able to create your own champions and save them. Being able to trade champions with friends or on bulletin boards would greatly expand **DUNGEON MASTER'S** already awesome playability.

FTL has a **DUNGEON MASTER** hintbook coming out soon. I can't wait to go browsing through it to see what I missed. There are quite a few key puzzles I want to look up.

FTL plans to have other **DUNGEON MASTER** type games out in the future. I look forward to seeing how they might improve on a nearly perfect product.

Circle Reader Service Number 80.

Name: **DUNGEON MASTER**
Type: Role-Playing Game
Formats: Atari ST now. Amiga by the end of July 1988, Apple IIGS in the Fall
Publisher: FTL Games
Distributors: Several
Designers: Doug Bell, Andy Jaros, Mike Newton, Dennis Walker
Ages: 10 to adult
Players: One only
Requirements: Color monitor
Price: \$39.95

Ability Level:	Beginner to Advanced
Packaging:	Very Good (8)
Documentation:	Excellent (9)
Graphics/Text:	Excellent (10)
Playability:	Excellent (10)

CP RATING: 9.65

overtime to add special features — features only found by the most experimental and observant of players. This game is a tour de force of hidden features (in that way, much like Nintendo's **SUPER MARIO BROS.**) And sometimes you can find surprising uses for the objects you find. For instance, a step-ladder is necessary to cross narrow chasms and rivers of blood in some dungeons (anyway, that's what they call them — they don't really look that bad), but the added advantage of the step-ladder is that you can straddle the chasms and ambush your enemies (most of whom always stay on the paths).

There is a considerable amount of strategy involved in this game. Each enemy has its strengths and its weaknesses. For instance, the Darknuts are invincible from the front, but vulnerable from the back and sides. Dedongos can only be killed with properly placed bombs. One bomb can immobilize a Dedongo long enough for you to dispatch him with your sword, or you can get the Dedongo to swallow two bombs, and that will do him in as well.

Bombs are found here and there, but you can only carry eight at a time. There is a way to carry twelve, but you have to find it. You can use bombs against enemies like the Dedongo, but bombs are also useful for blowing holes in certain dungeon walls.

The other feature of this game that sets new standards is its ability to save games. A built-in battery can actually save games in progress for up to five years. This means that, for the first time I know of in home entertainment system history, you can actually have a game that doesn't have to be played in one sitting. This feature will be found on other game cartridges as well. Now role playing games and adventure games are feasible on home game machines — where they were once the province of home computer systems only.

Starting Over Again

Once you defeat Ganon and save the Princess, you aren't necessarily through. A

second quest awaits. If you choose to, you can start all over and play the game again — only this time it's harder. The enemies are more powerful and the objects are in different places. And even though the games seems pretty much the same, there are subtle, but entertaining differences. For instance, you can now walk through walls in some dungeon rooms. So if a bomb doesn't work, you might just walk on through. And there are pink puff balls that make your sword inoperable until you find a blue puff ball to restore it. This can be really inconvenient. (Hint: Sometimes the whistle can restore the sword, but not always.)

There are so many subtleties to this game that there is a hot line for getting hints, but most people I've met are connected with a network of other players who can provide hints and tips. I was able to solve many of the mysteries only with the help of other players like my friend Alex, and Margaret Wagner (Roy's wife), who had preceded me through the game and guided me to some of the more obscure dungeon locations the second time through. By the way, in addition to

Name: THE LEGEND OF ZELDA
Type: Role-Playing Action
Format Reviewed: Nintendo Entertainment System Cartridge
Publisher: Nintendo of America, Inc.
Ages: 6-60
Players: one at a time: (up to 3 saved games in progress)
Requirements: NES and controller, cartridge
Price: \$44.95

Ability Level: Easy to Intermediate
Packaging: Average (7)
Documentation: Adequate (7)
Graphics/Text: Excellent (9.5)
Playability: Great (10)

CP RATING: 9.13

Nintendo's hot line, there are many hints in the Nintendo Player's Guide, and monthly hints in Nintendo's newsletter (available to all NES owners at nominal charge).

LEGEND OF ZELDA requires some manual dexterity, since you must guide Link through some tight corners and maneuver him around some deadly and erratic enemies. It also takes patience and careful thought. Each dungeon level has a map hidden somewhere. Often, with the help of the map, you can identify places where you haven't been yet and search for a route to them. Sometimes the routes are pretty indirect.

Like many of the Nintendo games, the **LEGEND OF ZELDA** provides excellent graphics — coming very close to the arcade quality found on dedicated coin-op games. Even though the graphics fall just short of that quality, they are so much better than those on former game systems that there is little sense of playing on a cheap home TV system. Not only is the graphic quality excellent, but the animation is very smooth and fast. Only on the most crowded screens is there any noticeable slowing of the movement. There are a few places where strange machine code flashes briefly on the screen — minor bugs — but the game didn't seem to have any major problems. I did wonder what would happen if you got caught by a Like Like and didn't have a working sword, or any other effective weapons to use against it.

Anyway, for those who really like games like this (and there seem to be plenty of them), the **LEGEND OF ZELDA** is probably worth the price of the Nintendo machine all by itself. The hours of enjoyment you can get from this one game made me glad I got the machine, and certainly made me look forward to future titles. I have to echo my friend Alex's thought when he asked, "Is there a third quest after you kill Ganon the second time?" That's how you feel when you finish this game — ready to play it again.

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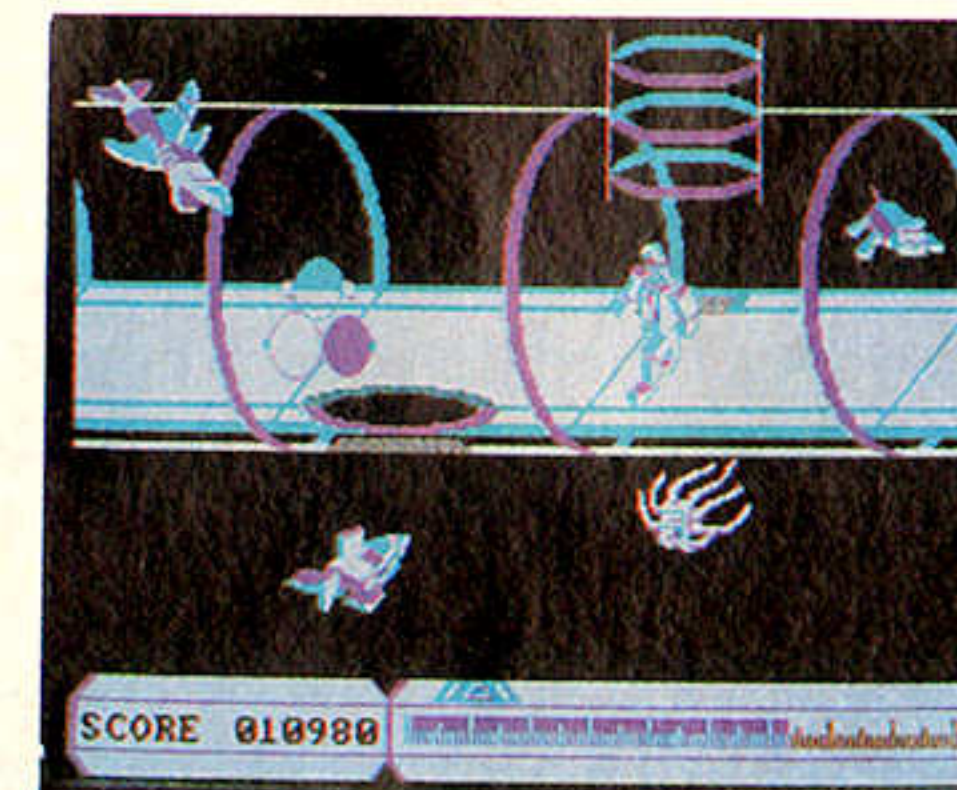
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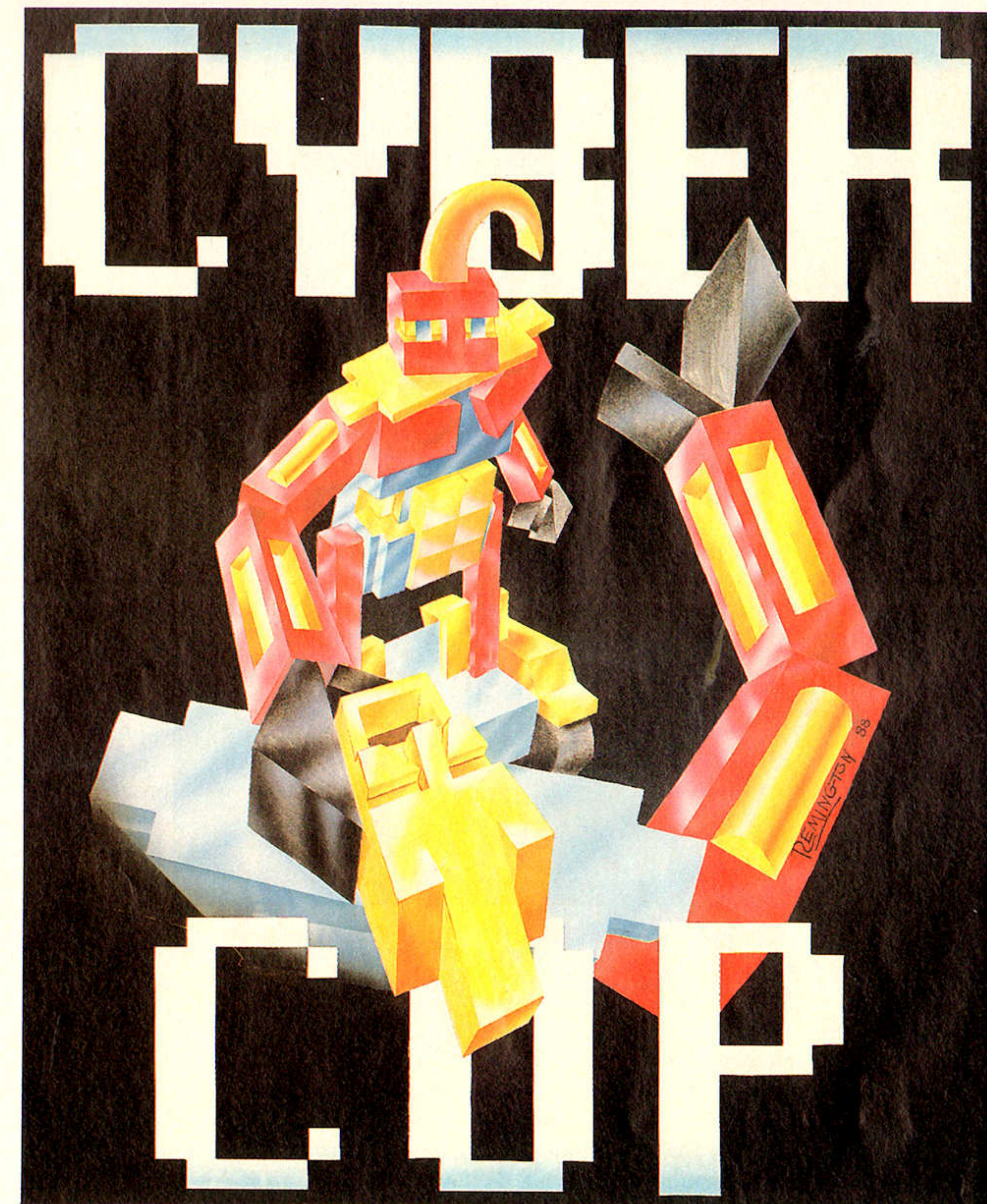
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Circle Reader Service Number 89.

A Sophisticated Flying Tool



By Fred Blechman

Learning to fly a military fighter aircraft takes hundreds of hours of training in actual flight. Therefore, it's no surprise that microcomputer flight simulators that attempt to represent the state of the art in today's fighter planes take considerable time to learn to "fly" properly. This is certainly true in the case of Spectrum HoloByte's **FALCON — The F-16 Fighter Simulation.**

This is a VERY sophisticated program, with variations and selections that should keep you busy for dozens and dozens of hours. Although it is not very difficult to get airborne,

it will take study, time and practice to move beyond the Rookie stage and into dogfighting. **FALCON** even offers a two-player dogfight option using two computers.

The IBM PC version of **FALCON** will run on an XT or AT or 100% compatible, with either an EGA, CGA or Hercules compatible display board. If you use an EGA board the program runs in the CGA mode. You'll only need 256K RAM if you use DOS 2.X, but 384K RAM is required with DOS 3.X if you want to use all options.

A joystick is supported, but I don't recommend it. I tried several different joysticks with **FALCON**. They all worked, but with varying

degrees of dissatisfaction. Even though I prefer a joystick with most flight simulators, I found **FALCON** easier to control with the keyboard.

You won't be able to take off without first consulting the excellent Flight Manual. The 132-page 8-1/2" x 5-1/2" bound manual is beautifully produced, with an unbelievable 237 significant and clearly printed illustrations.

Part I covers your first flight, with setup and loading instructions, cockpit orientation, takeoff procedure, first flight, and encountering the enemy. Part II covers the many keyboard commands, armament, and the cockpit displays and views. Part III goes into the pilot ranks, missions, awards and merits. Part IV covers advanced fighter training, flight performance, combat maneuvers, and a "black box" that records your flight path for later replay.

Your First Flight

After some initial choices (keyboard or joystick, sound on or off, one or two players), and a Duty Roster of pilots, you choose your rank, mission, and the number of Russian MiG fighters to be engaged. There are five ranks. The 1st LT. rank will not allow crashes, and each rank gets progressively tougher. The COLONEL rank is certain annihilation until you become expert in flying the **FALCON** under all conditions. Each mission has a distinct service ribbon that is awarded if the mission is successfully accomplished, and medals can also be awarded.

Next you select your armament and then find yourself at the beginning of Runway 36, ready for takeoff. Start the engine, release the brakes and watch the runway beginning to move under you. The Heads Up Display (HUD) continuously shows your heading, speed, and altitude as you takeoff, climb and turn. For an even "hotter" takeoff, afterburner power is available. The object is to complete your mission, return to base and land.

You can look out the left side, the right side or behind you. There is no view directly below, but you can change a screen directly beneath the HUD from Radar Mode (horizon and relative position of enemy planes) to Map Mode (current location in the **FALCON** world, along with landmarks). The left and

36 ▶

Back to the Revolution

By J.L. Miller

SONS OF LIBERTY is SSI's latest release in their operational battle series of pre-twentieth century warfare. Their prior releases have all been concerned with the American Civil War, (Antietam, Gettysburg, Chickamauga, and Shiloh). **SONS OF LIBERTY** takes the system back fourscore years and adds appropriate tactical minutiae to simulate the Revolutionary War.

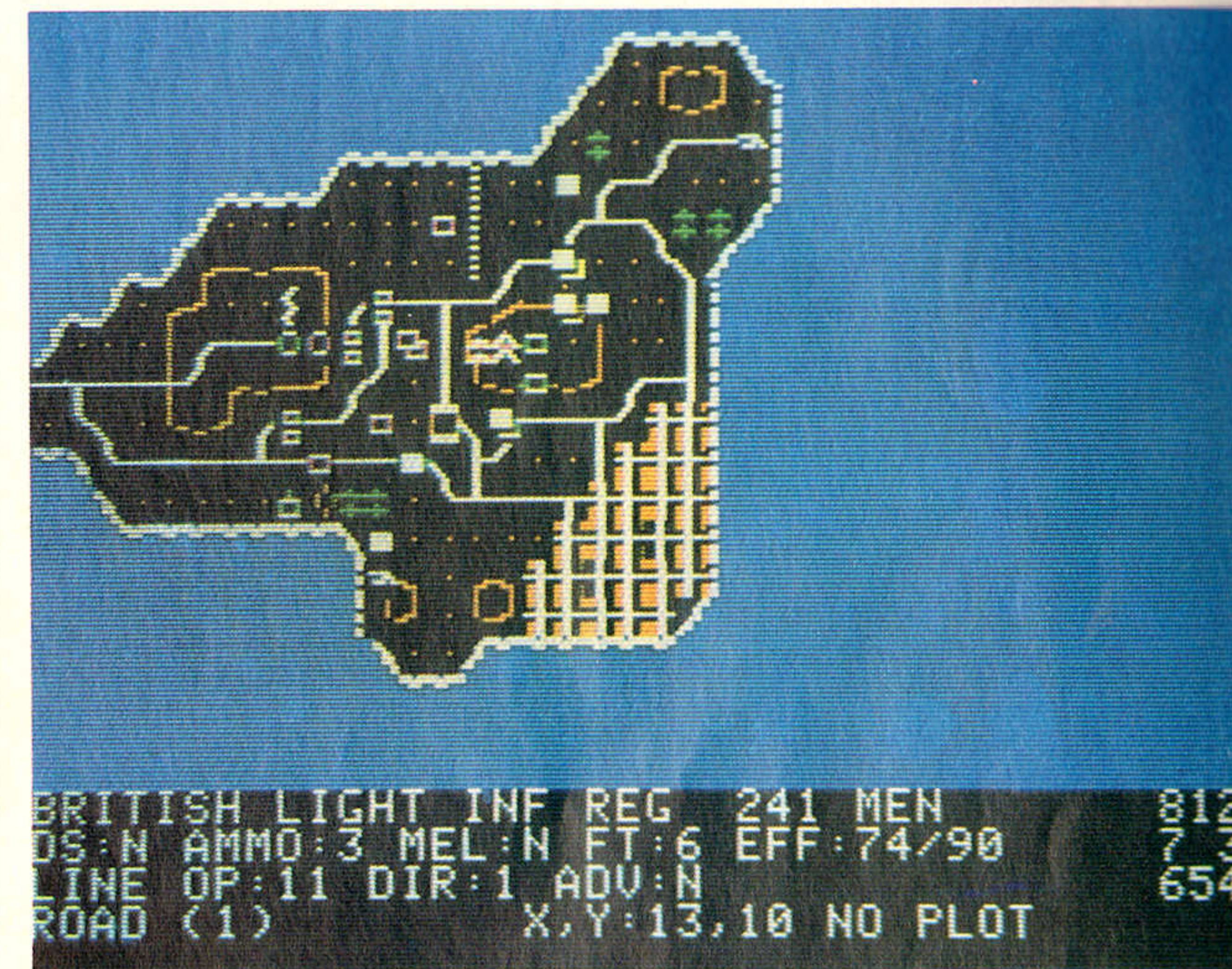
The simulation covers the major engagements of the Colonial Army units struggle for independence and/or survival against the British colossus. Three scenarios are included; Bunker Hill, Monmouth and Saratoga.

The documentation is complete, and offers a very complete layered-on series of instructions to the user. Deeply appreciated are the maps illustrating the actual battle maneuvers. Options are offered for beginner through advanced; the more advanced mode of play offers unit formations and leadership. While this does add complexity, it also adds to the realism and accuracy of the simulation.

The Play

The most visible difference between **SONS OF LIBERTY** and it's Civil War progenitors is the lessened effect of small arms fire. Simply put, the musket was much less effective as a killing tool beyond almost point-blank range. Also, changing formations (from column to line or vice versa) requires an operation point; the Civil War simulations allowed this to be accomplished without cost. This reflects the more cumbersome formations of the late eighteenth century.

Also, morale appears much more important. American Colonial troops are quite adequate at long-range skirmishing, but their ability to stand up to close assault against British regulars is quite another matter. Thus, the key to combat success depends on the opponent; the American



strives to defeat the British at a distance, while the British seek to drive their point home with cold steel.

The Bunker Hill scenario is a virtual minigame and offers a good learning tool. Unit density is very low, and a game can be played in an afternoon. Monmouth and Saratoga are full-fledged battles.

Tactical Suggestions

The documentation offers strategic and operational advice for each side. As such, the advice is quite accurate. Since the computer can play itself, a user can watch and observe the tactical dispositions and actions on both sides before committing himself to the fray.

Basically, proper employment of artillery is a key to battle success. This is the only effective means of a long-distance combat multiplier for the British. American troops are more effective at long-distance sniping, although combat losses will generally be small and decisive only

over the long haul.

On the other hand cohesive British close assaults can quickly put an end to the Colonial hope for victory. The Bunker Hill scenario is ahistorical in that both the computer (and hopefully the player) will never act as stupidly as did the British commander in reality. Even a cohesive British assault will fail against a fortified set of breastworks; thus, the British must flank the American fortifications and seek to move against the American rear.

Monmouth offers both sides a chance for offensive and defensive maneuver. The Americans must seek to inflict maximum damage upon the British before the British reinforcements can bring their weight to bear upon the outcome. When the British reinforcements do appear, the Americas must wage a careful retrograde operations, trading space for time. It is a military adage that a successful retrograde is the one of the most difficult operations; Monmouth will prove the veracity of that statement.

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Cool Off with Winter Fun

By Roy Wagner

events that attempt to capture the excitement of the Olympics on our computer screens. EPYX has worked with Olympic team personnel to fine tune the computer play to the realism of the actual events. I feel that many of the events are excellent simulations, while some are surprising disappointments.

The Events: Winners and Losers

Gold Medal Winners

The **Downhill** ski run is the most elaborate event. You have one course. Before the event begins, you can pick four points along the course for a video camera to record your run. As you make the run, the screen perspective changes from a view going down the hill to a side view as you pass by the camera. You can even perform a flip as you pass across the screen. If you don't want to have this somewhat distracting change of view, you can position all the cameras at the top of the run. (I highly recommend you do this for any serious downhill runs.) You are able to crouch down to increase speed (pushing joystick forward) or slow down (pulling joystick back). The course is fast and fun.

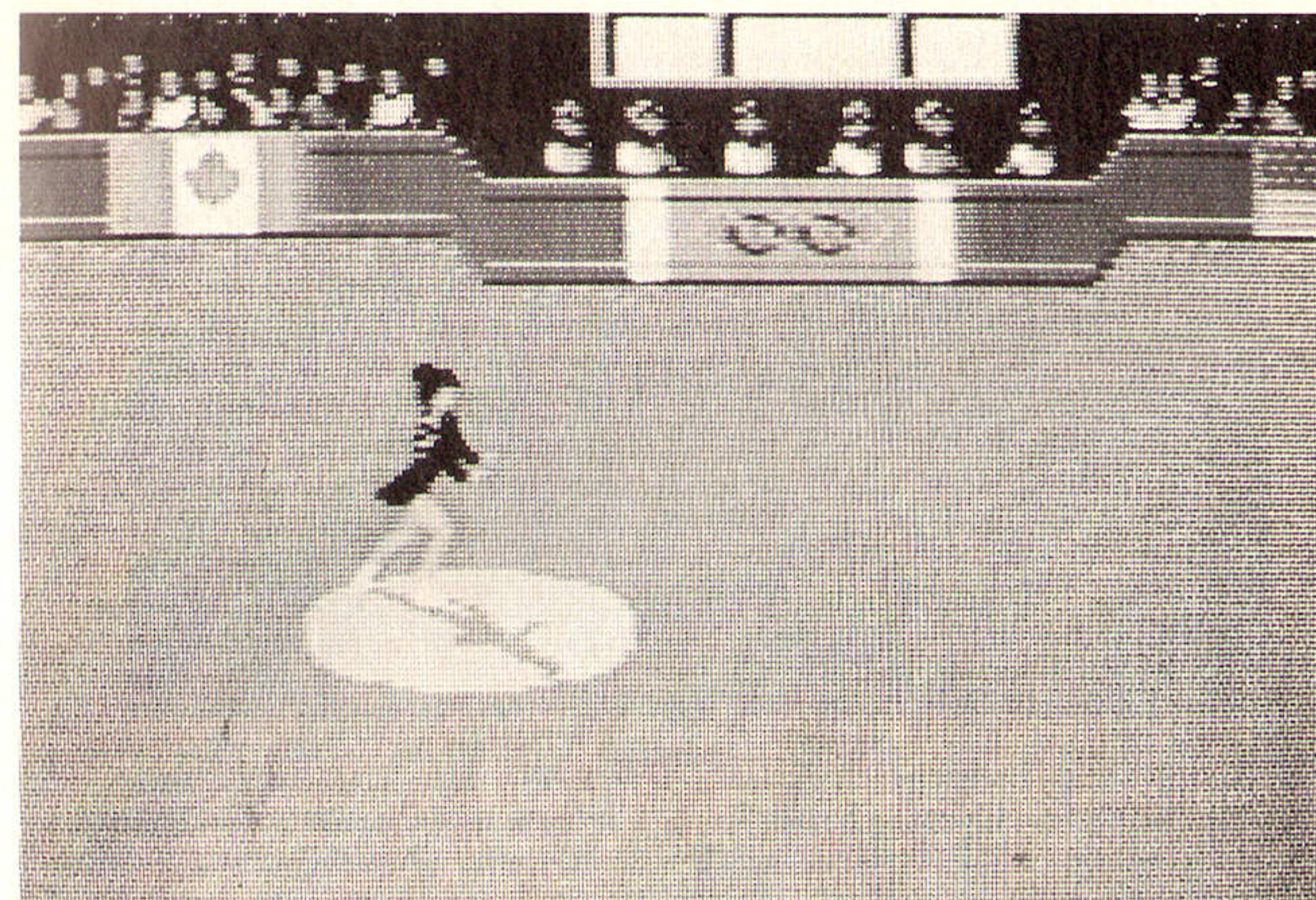
The **Ski Jump** is excellent. You start with a side view of the tower and run, but as you start you are heading down the run, building up speed. You press the joystick button to make your jump. The view then changes again to a side view and you must use the joystick to control your airborne

flight. A good landing takes practice and timing as you press the button and pull down to land. You are judged on both distance and your style (holding a good flight appearance).

The **Figure Skating** is very well implemented and captures the essence of the event. You can select from a variety of music, from classical to hard rock. You must listen to the music and select from the seven compulsory moves. You choreograph the entire performance keeping in mind that some moves are difficult to perform in sequence.

Once you have planned your routine, you compete in the event by starting the music and skating around the rink by moving the joystick left and right. You move the joystick up at the exact time in the music that you want to perform each move. A timebar assists by indicating when each move should be performed. If you fall, you can press the joystick button to continue. This event is therefore based on proper timing and a good mix of moves to receive a top score. The animated graphics are excellent.

Speed Skating requires the coordinated movement of the joystick left and right repeatedly for top speed and no falls. You must smoothly transition from the straight section to the long curves. You can select from four distances. On the longer races, you must cross over to change lanes by moving the joystick up or down. This event requires a steady, paced movement of the joystick. If you fall you can get up to continue.



Silver Medal Winner

The **Cross Country** event is good, but only uses a fairly flat course. Similar to Speed Skating, this event also requires the rhythmic movement of the joystick right and left, matching the position of the skier's legs. When going uphill, you can press the joystick button to assist in "stepping up" the hill. When going downhill, you can use the joystick button to gain extra speed by moving the poles to "double pole". The course consists of equal portions of uphill, downhill and flat terrain.

You can choose from three courses of different lengths. You race against one other skier shown on the screen. This event requires you to maintain a steady momentum over all types of terrain and enduring the length of the race.

The smoothly scrolling terrain across the screen was very well done, but the event lacked variety since each course only repeated the same terrain. The similar Biathlon event in other winter game products offered more scenic interest and the challenge of shooting at a target, but lacked the smooth scrolling.

Out of Medal Consideration

Though the graphics are great, the **Luge** was disappointing. I'm sure a great

amount of graphic and programming work went into this event, but it fails to be a winner.

You start by selecting from four different courses. All contenders compete on the same course. The start is great as you have thirty seconds to begin your run. Holding down the joystick button, you move the joystick forward and back to build up forward release momentum. To shove off, you release the button, and press forward on the joystick. You can now rapidly tap the button to increase forward momentum with your hands until you hit the steep downward launch ramp.

From here on the event goes significantly "downhill" (pun intended). Rather than seeing the run from the luge, you "watch" it from a side view perspective. You get no feel for the curves as they cross left and right across your monitor. You control all aspects of the run (steering, drift, and position).

Why couldn't this event be based on the very realistic perspective used in the Bobsled event of WINTER GAMES? And try as you will, you can't fall off the luge, drop from a curve, or fly off the course. The challenge in this one is trying to find any fun in it.

The **Slalom** event is very disappointing. The graphic presentation is poor, the up and down joystick movement is contrary to an actual downhill slalom and the

event is fairly difficult. You race against another skier displayed with you. Staying within the narrow course is tough, but hitting any flag ends the run. Four courses are available, but getting through the shortest one should be enough of this event for anyone.

Closing Ceremonies

THE GAMES could have been a solid gold medal winner if the perspective of the Bobsled in WINTER GAMES had been used for the Luge and if the Slalom course had a more realistic perspective as in WORLD GAMES. I must credit EPYX with NOT copying their own previous simulations and giving the buyer something new, but unfortunately this made some events less realistic.

GOLD MEDAL events in THE GAMES: SUMMER EDITION coming out sometime this summer. Circle Reader Service Number 43.

Name: THE GAMES: WINTER EDITION
Type: Sports Simulation
Formats: IBM, C64 & Apple
Publisher: EPYX
Designers: Several
Ages: 10 to adult
Players: One to Eight
Requirements: Joystick
Price: \$39.95

Ability Level:	Intermediate
Packaging:	Very Good (8)
Documentation:	Very Good (8)
Graphics/Text:	Very Good (8)
Realism:	Excellent (9)
Playability:	Excellent (9)

CP RATING: 8.50

right side views also show some additional instruments. This is all a whole lot more complicated than it may seem. It will probably take you several hours of practice to successfully complete even the Milk Run mission.

Landings and Acrobatics

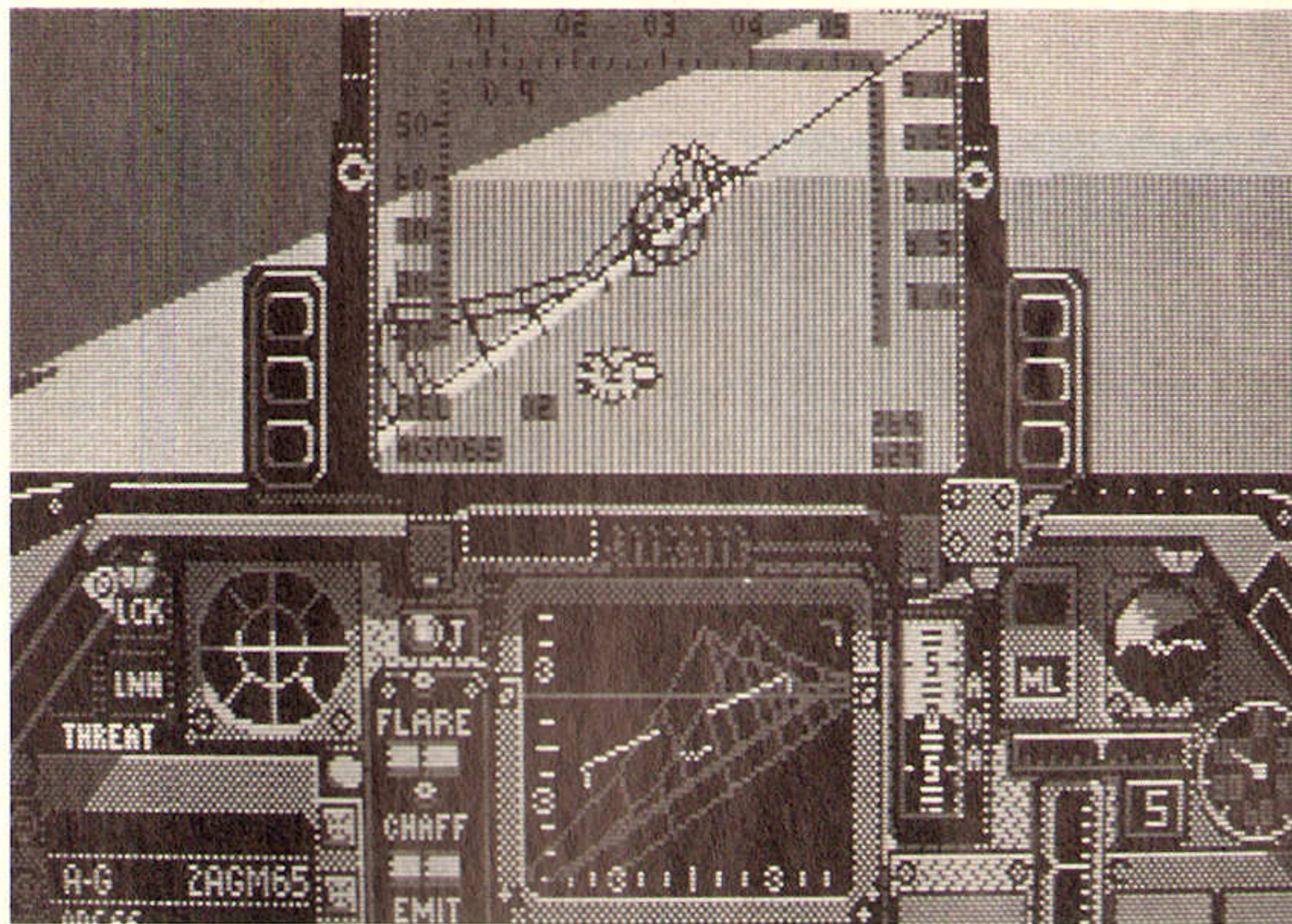
FALCON is a very easy plane to overcontrol, so the program provides a sensitivity level and overall speed control. I used the lowest sensitivity and slowest speed and still had trouble with landings. Air brakes, throttle and nose position control your speed and altitude. You must turn to line yourself up with the runway. The instrument landing system (ILS) and a special HUD display can be a great help if used properly.

Acrobatics are a breeze. HUD "ladder" (angular measurement) markings make it easy to determine your relative attitude. The loop, Split-S, Immelmann, and a number of other air combat maneuvers are described in the manual.

Other Features

The "Black Box" is a cockpit flight recorder that records up to the last ten minutes of your F-16 flight path (and also any MiGs in the area) for instant playback. You can select any one of eight scales, and advance "frames" at two different rates. Three different views are shown: top view, looking north and looking east. You can playback, clear the screen at any point during playback, rewind to the start, erase, or go back to flight mode.

It's fascinating to review your flight path after takeoff and various maneuvers — especially when you're trying to find your way back to the airport. Since the top view traces your path from takeoff, you can use the recording at any time (flight activity freezes while you view the recording) to get an idea



of where you are in reference to your starting point. The different scales can be used to change the total area shown. This recording, together with the cockpit Map display, can give you a pretty good idea what heading to fly to get back to base.

Also, you can put your HUD in the landing mode to display an ILS cursor, and periodic reports are issued (message printed at the top of the screen) telling you the direction and distance to base.

At the completion of a mission you may see one or more "snapshots" that describe the events leading up to the completion of your mission, from MISSILE HIT to FUNERAL AND THE MISSING MAN. You may also see a record of merits (points), medals and ribbons earned. There is also a screen that lists the "top ten" pilots (even those killed or captured).

Flight Characteristics

Generally speaking, I found **FALCON** harder to fly than a real plane. The controls vary (like a real plane, but more so) from mushy to overly sensitive, depending on speed, power, sensitivity setting and CPU speed setting. The joystick was too sensitive some times, not sensitive enough at other times. The keyboard seemed better, but could also easily overcontrol. Practice definitely helped.

It takes considerable practice to fly **FALCON** smoothly. For example, in making a landing approach, when you use the air brakes the nose tries to drop severely. You need to constantly pull back on the stick to keep from diving. Adding throttle keeps the

nose up, but also increases the speed — just like the real thing, except the real thing uses "trim tabs" to neutralize stick pressure.

Mission Debriefing

Everything considered, **FALCON** is an extraordinary program, and somewhat addictive. If you're looking for a flight simulator with thrills and excitement, acrobatics, endless variety, "blood and guts" scenarios, medals, and two-player competition, I think you'll find **FALCON** will keep you interested — and humble!

Circle Reader Service Number 76.

Name: FALCON F-16
Type: Fighter Aircraft Simulation
Formats: IBM PC & Macintosh
Publisher: Spectrum Holobyte
Ages: 12 to adult
Players: One or two
Requirements: CGA, EGA or Hercules graphics
Price: \$49.95

Ability Level: Intermediate-Advanced
Packaging: Excellent (10)
Documentation: Excellent (9.5)
Graphics/Text: Very Good (8)
Realism: Average (5)
Playability: Very Good (8.5)

CP RATING: 8.3

Summary of Game Ratings

This is a summary of the Scorecard ratings in our AUGUST ISSUE.

NAME	MANUFACTURER	MACHINE	REQUIREMENTS	PRICE	CPRating
Solitaire Royale	Spectrum Holobyte	IBM, Mac	optional	\$49.95	9.50
ULTIMA V	Origin Systems	APP	optional	\$59.95	9.25
Bard's Tale III	Interplay Prod.	APP, C64/128	64K	\$49.95	9.25
Nobunaga's Ambition	Koei Corp.	IBM	T/D,CGA/EGA	\$59.95	9.15
The Three Stooges	Cinemaware	AM, C64	Joystick	\$34.95	8.75
Police Quest	Sierra On-Line	IBM	256K Ram	\$49.95	8.50
Project Stealth Fighter	Microprose Software	C64/128, IBM	Joystick	\$39.95	8.25
Jinxter	Rainbird	All major machines	512/EGA, 64k	\$39.95	6.75
Ebonstar	MicroIllusions	Am.	512K Ram	\$49.95	5.25
The Hunt for Red Oct.	Datasoft	Am,AtST,C/64,IBM	512K IBM	\$49.95	4.47

KEYS TO SUMMARY

MACHINE:

AM; Amiga, APP; Apple, ATST; Atari ST, C64/128; Commodore 64/128,MAC; Macintosh, NI; Nintendo

REQUIREMENTS:

T/D; Two Drives

CGA/EGA; Color Graphics Adaptor, Enhanced Graphics Adaptor, these are color monitor cards that are put inside the IBM and IBM Clones that determine what type of monitor that you can hook up to. VGA games cannot be played on either of the other two cards. Video Graphics Adaptors are the top of the line (so far) of the color monitor cards.

Optional; no specific hardware required.

PRICE;

is usually the recommended retail, and may vary.

CP RATING;

is figured by averaging the scorecard ratings given by each individual reviewer. The CP Rating is assigned as follows; 1-2 (Poor) 3-4 (Fair) 5-6 (Average) 7-8 (Very Good) 9-10 (Excellent).

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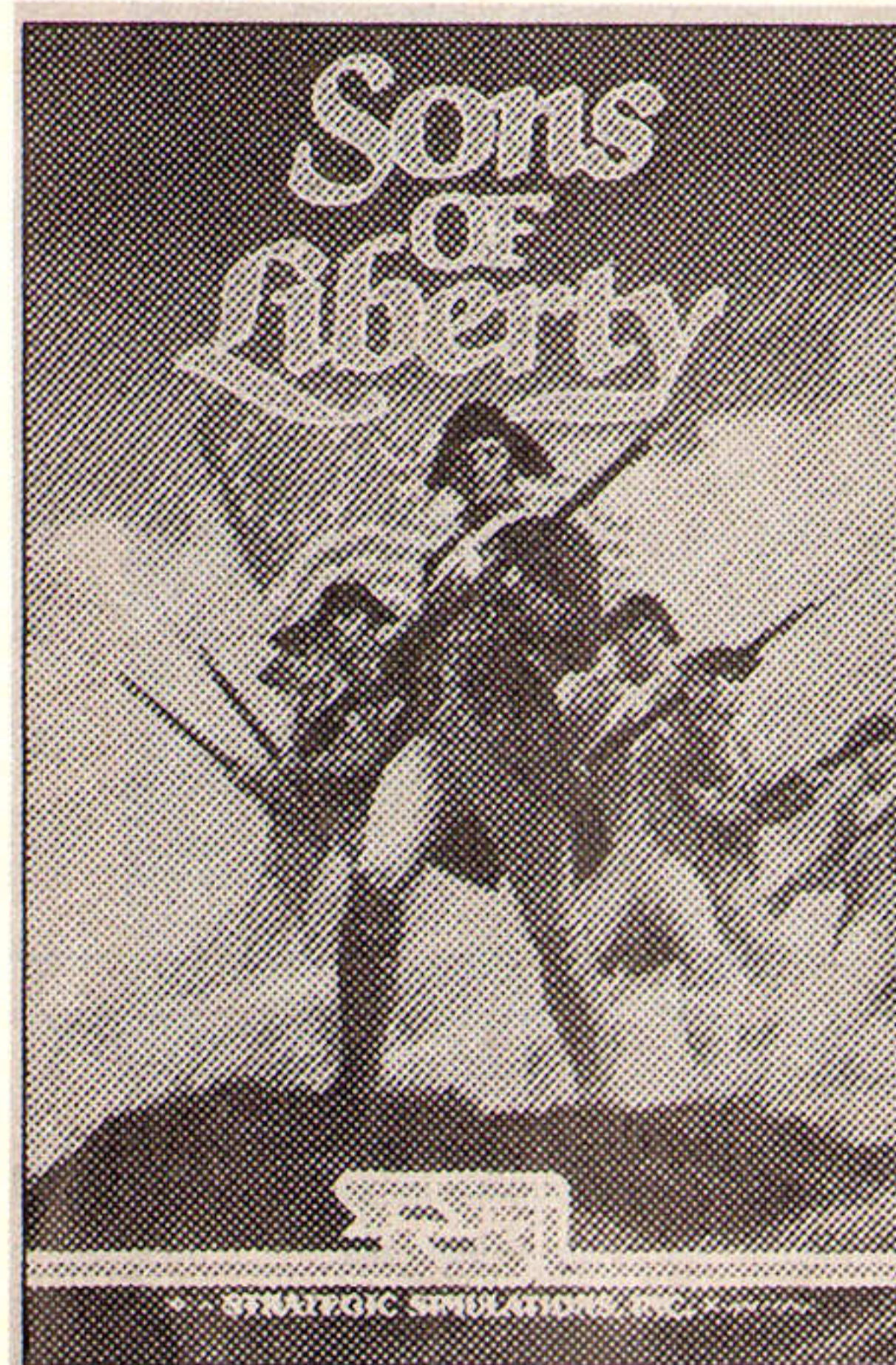
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Saratoga offers a balanced scenario, but in effect, only a portion of the battlefield. Historically, the Battle of Saratoga was a strategic defeat for the British, but one that was accomplished through inaction of the British command structure to follow General Burgoyne's plan. "Gentleman Johnny" Burgoyne was one of the British army's operational geniuses. His plan failed because of his peers and not because the American Army showed any true genius; and his failure, instrumental in that it was in impelling French assistance to the American cause, did not destroy his career. General Burgoyne went on to a successful military career in India and was instrumental in forging the formation of the British Raj.

REVOLUTIONARY WAR

American success in the Revolutionary War was not forged on the battlefield as much as in the diplomatic corridors. One must remember that the American cause was not a popular one domestically; one-third of the population supported the drive for independence, one-third was neutral, and one-third supported the Crown (the Tories).

While the colonies were an important segment of the British Empire (in 1770, Philadelphia was the second largest city in the Empire, after London). With the advent of the Revolution, British policymakers were in a quandary. An influential minority of British policymakers supported the American position; in effect, the Revolutionary War was the British Vietnam. Barbara Tuchman's book, 'The Price of Folly', contrasts the British position in the eighteenth century with the American position in Vietnam



two centuries later.

Bernard Cornwell (author of the Sharpe series, a group of novels following a British officer during the Napoleonic Wars) has recently published 'Redcoat'. This novel is an excellent depiction of the Revolutionary War, from the trenches, and is highly recommended for a clearer picture of the military and domestic scene.

Name: SONS OF LIBERTY
Type: Strategy
Formats: C64/128, Apple II
Publisher:
 Strategic Simulations
Designers: David Landrey &
 Chuck Kroegel
Ages: 12 and up
Players: One or two
Requirements: None
Price: \$34.95

Ability Level:	Intermediate
Packaging:	Excellent (9)
Documentation:	Excellent (9)
Graphics/Text:	Very Good (7.5)
Realism:	Very Good (8)
Playability:	Average (6.5)

CP RATING: 7.5

Thus, the British Empire could have defeated the American rebels if sufficient funds and troops were utilized. In 'Redcoats', General Howe recognizes that an additional 100,000 British troops would be required to defeat the rebellion. But the American Rebellion did not occur in a vacuum; in effect, it became a sideshow for the 'major powers', Britain and France, — a site where they could battle for political hegemony without unaffordable costs. When British interests were threatened in more vital areas (the Continent, India, and the Sugar Islands), British interests quickly acknowledged the lack of strategic import of the Revolutionary War.

Conclusions

SONS OF LIBERTY is an accurate simulation of the Revolutionary battles. The problem is that these battles are not that fascinating intrinsically. British military power could have defeated the rebels if applied without constraints. However, the Rules of Engagement for British Forces hamstrung the military.

While the simulation is accurate on a tactical level, it simply lacks sufficient charisma and/or innovation to engender repeated playings. Simulation popularity polls consistently show the American Revolutionary War(simulations) to be lower rated, period. While **SONS OF LIBERTY** is to be commended for adding a new title to computer land combat games, I can only recommend it to someone interested in the period. The game does not soar above its period.

Circle Reader Service Number 71.

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The Future of Computer Wargaming

By J.L. Miller

Computer wargaming appears to be an ever-diminishing niche of the computer home entertainment market. Outpaced by the popularity of arcade and fantasy subjects, its vocal minority is a "voice crying out in the wilderness". Intensive historical research and accuracy requires capital expenditure; yet the return on investment is limited to a buying public of c. 30,000.

While simulators can cross over to the general gaming public and garner sales in excess of 100,000 unit sales (as **MicroProse** can attest), the more traditional wargame sales languish. This article will survey the market and generally suggest what is coming.

Subject Matter

The game is the thing; in board wargaming, designer Richard Berg often and vociferously lamented the "Three N Thesis". Simply put, Mr. Berg noted that the key to market success involved Nazis, Nukes and Nato; a simulation throwing all three N's into a single game was destined for gaming stardom. While the thesis is somewhat overwrought, it does bear witness to a basic truth. Computer wargames go through cycles; but World War II and modern simulations are often the basis of marketing efforts.

The companies in the marketplace have adopted various marketing strategies. Their efforts are noted below.

The Game Companies

Strategic Simulations, Inc. premiered the use of Civil War simulations in the marketing environment. **ANTIETAM** and **GETTYSBURG** garnered impressive sales; **CHICAMAUGA** and **SHILOH** were lesser successes, possibly leading to a point of diminishing returns. However, **SSI** designs

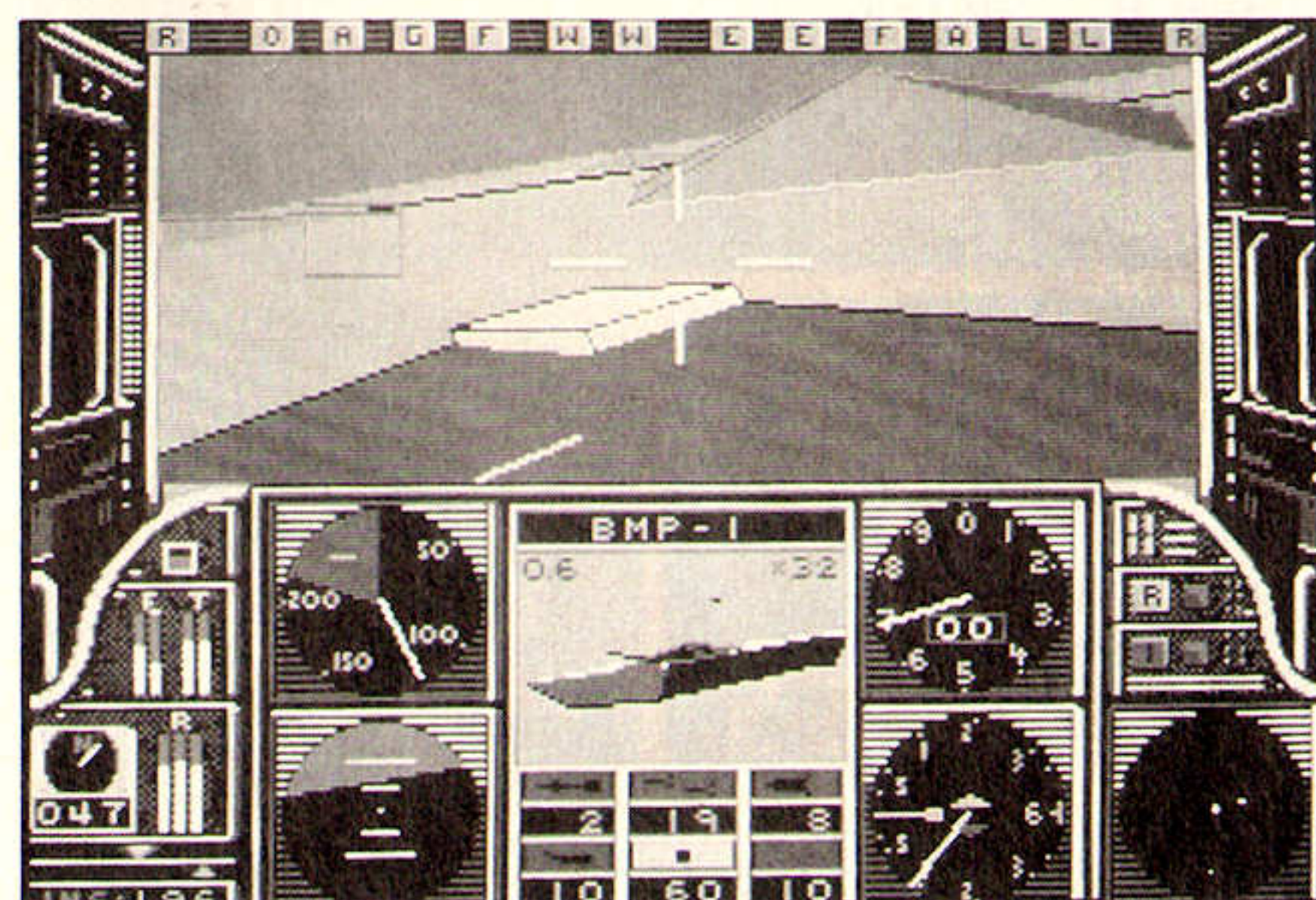
a multitude of simulations and can live with a lower profit ratio than can **MicroProse Software**. **MicroProse** premiered its land combat system (the **COMMAND SYSTEM**) with **NATO**, **CRUSADE IN EUROPE**, **DECISION IN THE DESERT** and finally, **CONFLICT IN VIETNAM**. Sales were adequate and the games themselves profitable. However, such games were not going to go platinum as did **SILENT SERVICE** and **GUNSHIP**. **MicroProse** decided to direct its efforts to the mega-hit; the smaller albeit profitable land wargame was not in its corporate picture.

SSI now does much of its design in-house. While Gary Grigsby is not an in-house designer, much of the **SSI** designs rest on his antecedents. Thus, his designs coupled with Chuck Kroegel (in-house) account for the bulk of recent land wargame efforts from **SSI**; and even more important, **SSI** has spread much of its assets into the fantasy market. **ADVANCED DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS** and its forthcoming sequels will cut deeply into the traditional land combat simulation designs. **MicroProse** has always worked in-house exclusively. Outside designs are rarely accepted. When the company decided to abandon the land wargame, could it be mere coincidence that in-house designer Ed Bever (primarily engaged with the **Command Series**) terminated his relationship with **MicroProse** at that time?

Strategic Studies Group has published numerous games, again always in-house. Their early games premiered to universal admiration (**CARRIERS AT WAR**, **EUROPE ABLAZE**, **REACH FOR THE STARS**). But their land combat games have garnered their share of critics. Utilizing the Battle-front system, **SSG** has published; **BATTLES FOR NORMANDY**, **RUSSIA, ROMMEL, DECISIVE BATTLES OF THE CIVIL WAR**, (VOL. I.) and **HALLS OF MONTEZUMA**. The company has proved somewhat reluctant to suffer the slings and arrows of criticism, and has responded aggressively against both 'Fire and Movement', and 'Computer Gaming World' for what they perceive as undue criticism. These magazines have criticized **SSG** for its menu-driven system of wargaming and its implementation. Be that as it may, **SSG** is one of the few computer design companies publishing land simulations for the computer gamer.

Avalon Hill has always been the traditional mecca for the board wargamer. Sadly, its computer simulations have not lived up to the traditions of its board-game cousins. **Avalon Hill** often publishes computer simulations of in-house board-game designs (e.g.; **GULF STRIKE**, **GUDERIAN**, and **CIVIL WAR**). While the board-game have become classics, all too often, the computer releases are simply too derivative. User interface can be awk-

Cockpit view from *Gunship* by **MicroProse**.



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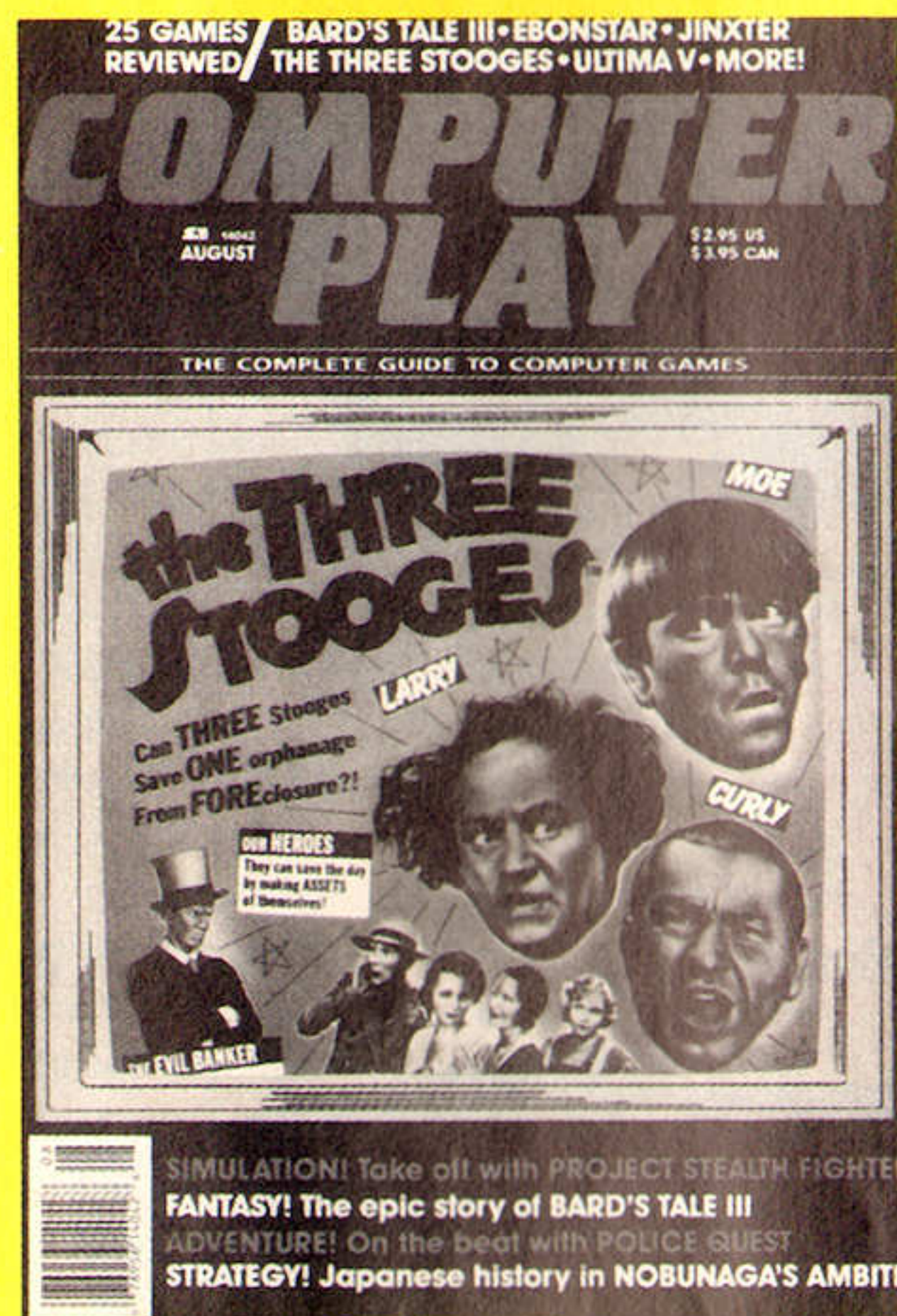
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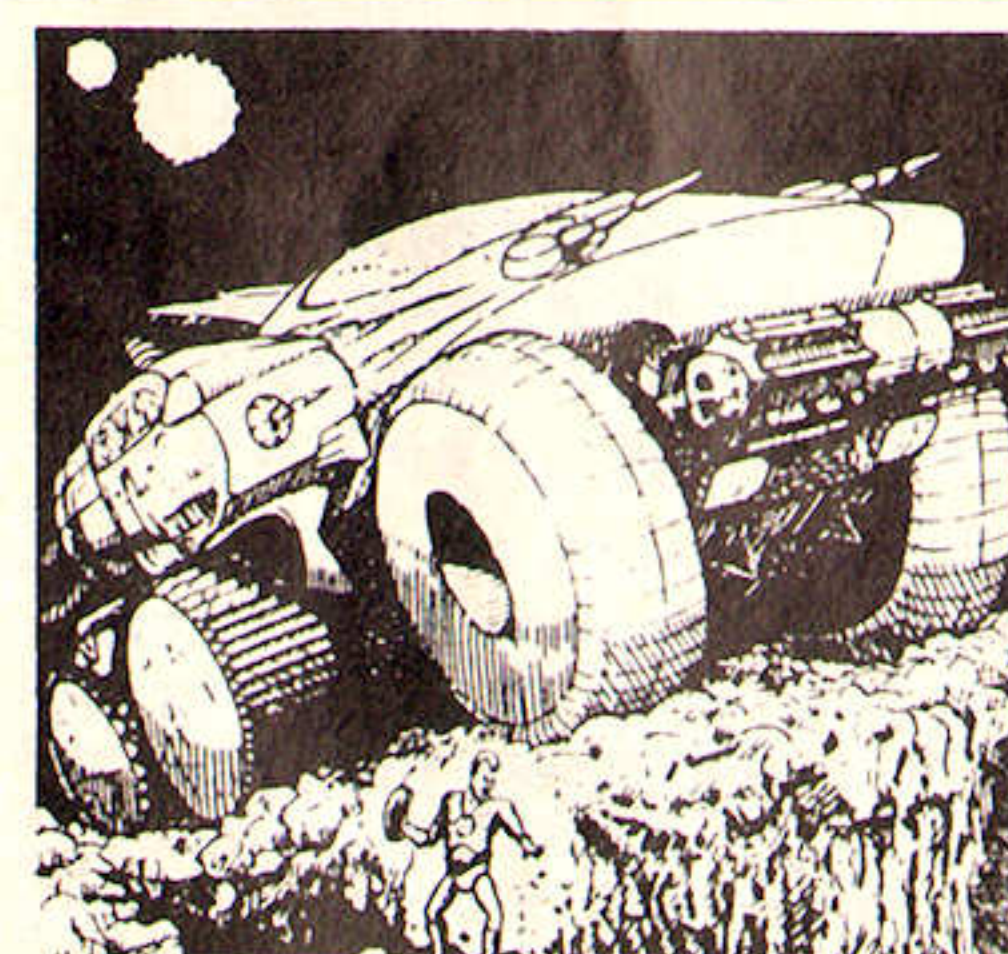
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For awhile it looked like her only option was to sell the house and car and declare bankruptcy. Fortunately, she didn't have to do any of that. Instead, she took a deep breath and decided that it was time to become financially independent.

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One thing we want to emphasize - this will not be material put together by a bunch of amateurs or worse yet 'book worms' who know what should work, but have never done it. Instead it's put together by a staff that has started with nothing and have ended up as millionaires.

They'll be giving you the type of tips and insight into things that only experience can give. They'll tell you step-by-step how they regularly made hundreds of thousands of dollars.

I imagine by now you're worried that a program like this will cost you a small fortune. And it would at most places. You could end up paying thousands getting the same type of advice at private consultations with financial experts or hundreds going to seminars.

Quite frankly, our team of experts could make far more money doing business in that way but they've reached the point where money is no longer a goal.

We've tried it that way and it turned out that we

were only helping the rich get richer, so now we're trying this technique of spreading our knowledge to the average person at a price they can afford - a mere \$10. We guarantee that you'll think it's worth every penny.

In fact, we're so sure of it that we're willing to guarantee you'll be pleased or we'll give you your money back if you let us know within 30 days - no questions asked.

That gives you almost a month to leisurely sit back and look over the material. We're confident you'll find it the most valuable information you've ever seen.

If you feel it can't help you, send the material back and we'll return your check or money order - uncashed.

Still skeptical? We can't say we blame you. There are enough rip-off artists out to cheat you. That's why we invite you to postdate your check a month from when you send it to safeguard yourself.

One thing that I'm sure is bothering you is that the only people you're hearing from about the program is us. That's why we've decided it's important to share with you some of the letters we've received from satisfied customers. All the following people are real but we've given you just the initials to protect the privacy of the individuals involved.

'I got the \$6000 I needed to send my daughter to college.'

'One of my biggest goals in life has always been to be able to finance my son and daughter's education. I had enough money saved up to send my son, but when my daughter's turn came up I couldn't come up with the money. I was in enough debt that no one would give me a loan and things looked hopeless until I came across your ad. Like most people, I figured as long as you guaranteed satisfaction, I had nothing to lose. Instead, I gained plenty. Within a few months I made enough to not only fund the \$6000 I needed to send her to college, but also was able to pay off my car, house, and get back on my feet. Thanks!

MM
Tarzana, Calif.

'I made a fortune on the stock market with the money I made from your program.'

'I've always been a person who loves the excitement of the stock market. To me there's nothing like the feeling of taking a risk. Recently, I got a tip of a surefire stock that would make me big money. Unfortunately, I didn't have any money to invest - that is until I sent away for your material. In the first week I made \$4000 and invested it all in the stock. Since then I've made an unbelievable financial killing on it with the money I'm making due to your program, I've got all the cash I need to keep playing the odds.

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We also thought you'd be interested in comments made by some of the national publications that have looked carefully at our program.

The Truth

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National Times

"We have to admit we were skeptical when we looked at this program, but to our surprise we found it to be a concise and easy to understand program on how to make money. We've investigated more than our share of rip-off schemes, and we can assure you this is not one of them. We've seen amazing results and if the financial experts involved in the program keep on offering this kind of advice in the future, we would expect to see even more people profit from it."

We could continue on with both letters from people who have found success and publications who have found that it works, but we think we've made our point.

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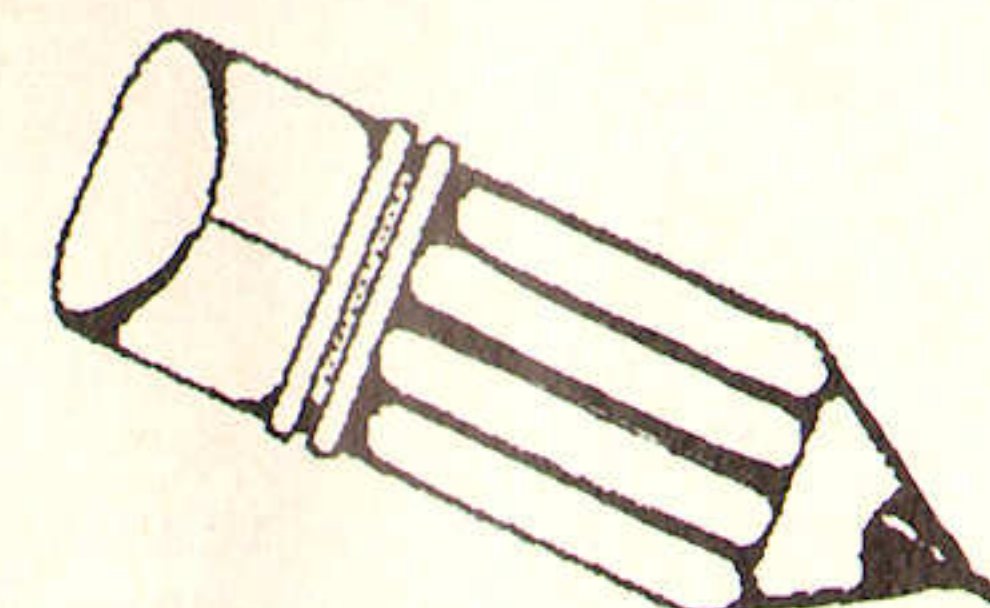
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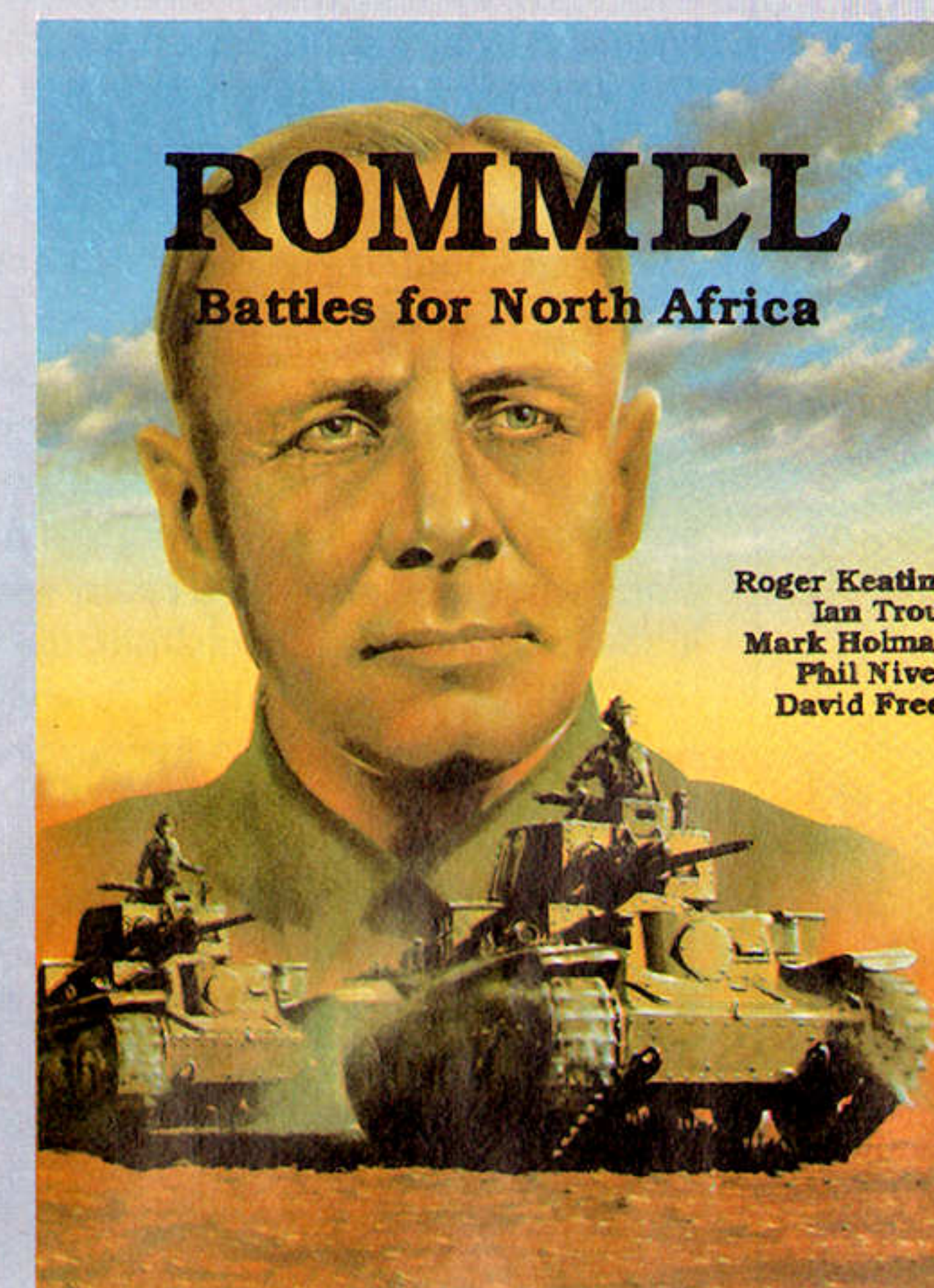
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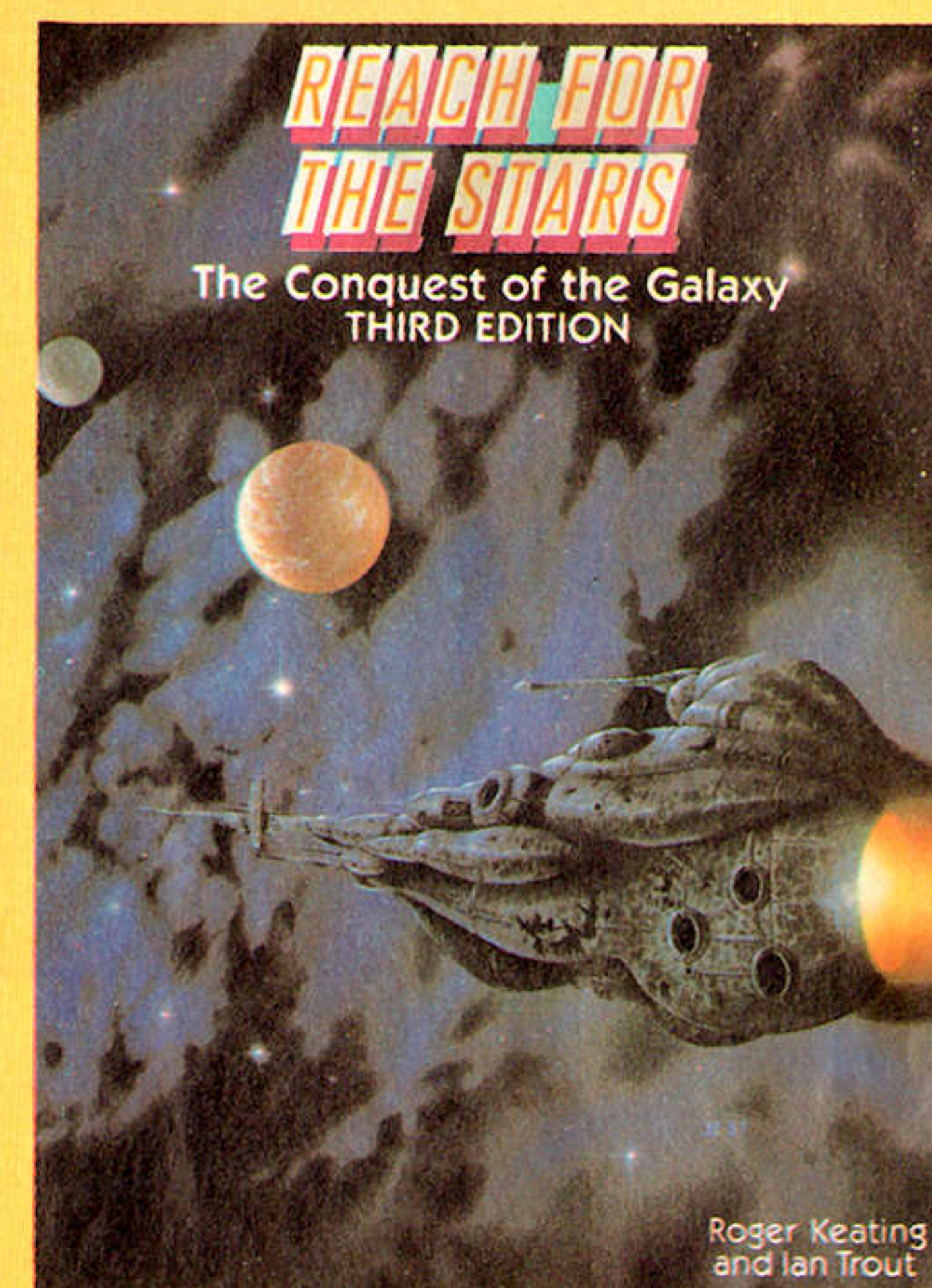
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Reach for the Stars is Strategic Studies Group's all-time classic game of space exploration and conquest. The third edition contains two great games in one; the original **Reach for the Stars** and an entirely new scenario, with lots of options for advanced play.

Whichever game you choose to play, you're in for a tough time. It's a four-cornered contest for domination of the galaxy and there's only one winner. The computer plays all places not taken by humans and it never gives anyone an even break.

To win a game of **Reach for the Stars** you must have explored all of the galaxy and colonized the choicest portions. You will have expanded your industry, engaged in frantic R&D, and produced a large space navy. This will have been employed in settling territorial disputes with your neighbours. As always, the person with the biggest navy gets to adjust the border.

It's not as easy as it sounds. Do the wrong thing and it could be three against one, especially if you're playing against Keating's Enhanced Veteran computer players. They just don't like you to start with, and can get really annoyed if you mess with them. That's why there are Beginner and Experienced players on which to first practice your galactic domination skills.

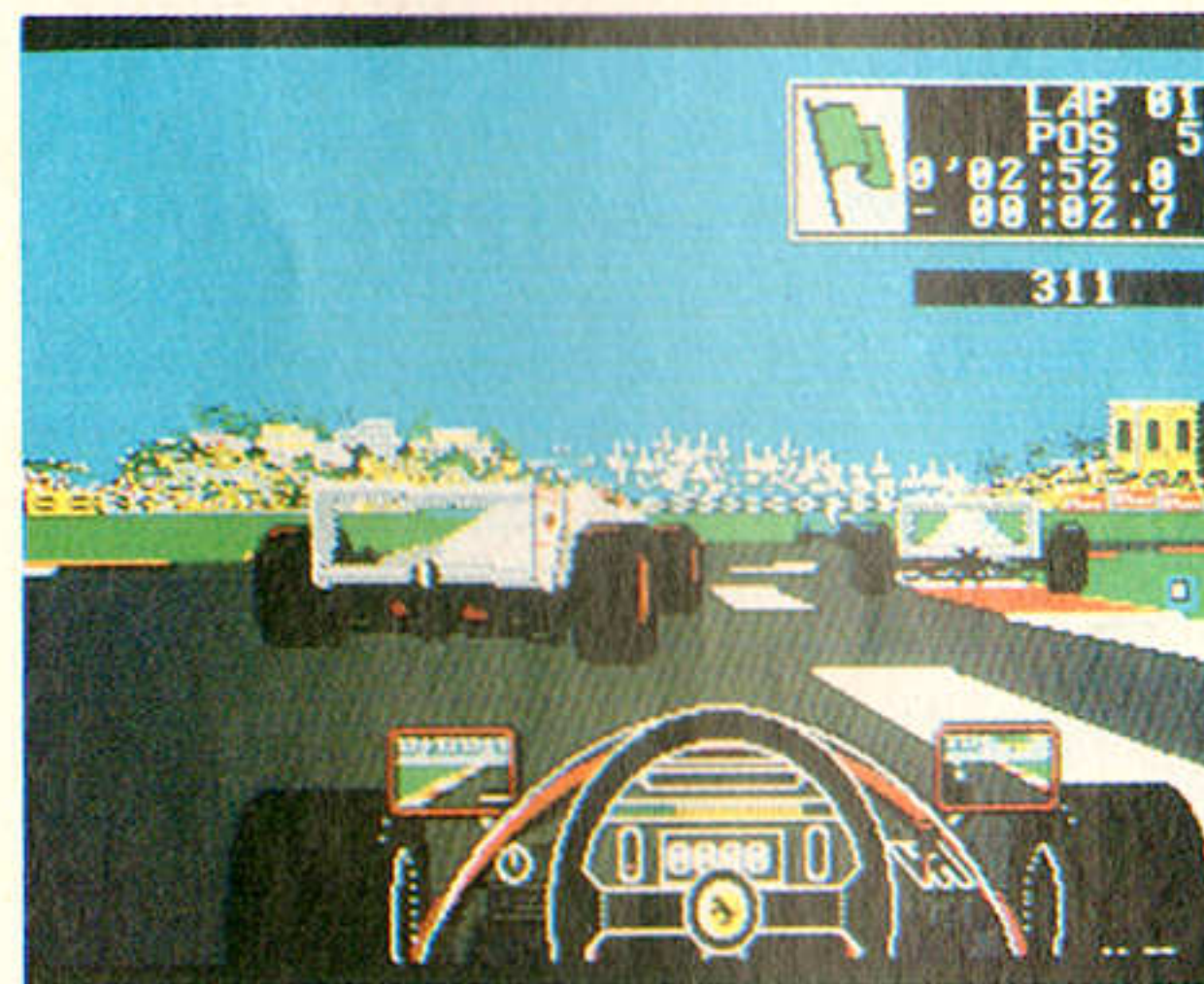
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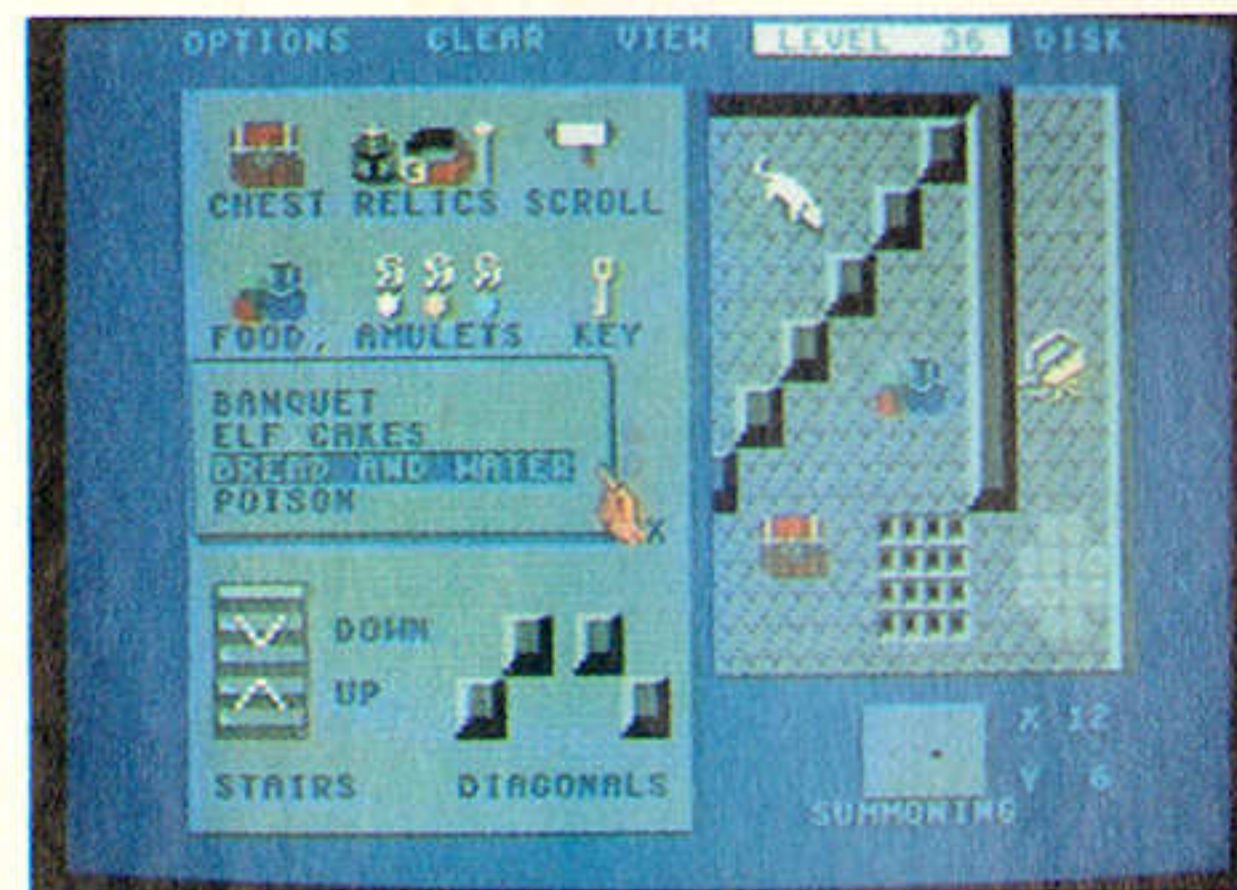
The second Infocom release is **GAMMA FORCE in PIT OF A THOUSAND SCREAMS**. It features a waterbeast with great strength, a human gifted with flight and future visions and an elfin princess of unearthly power. In their first adventure, this trio of superheroes team up to free their planet from an evil overlord and his pit of a thousand screams. IBM, Apple & C64. Infocom. Circle Reader Service Number 14.



Grand Prix Action

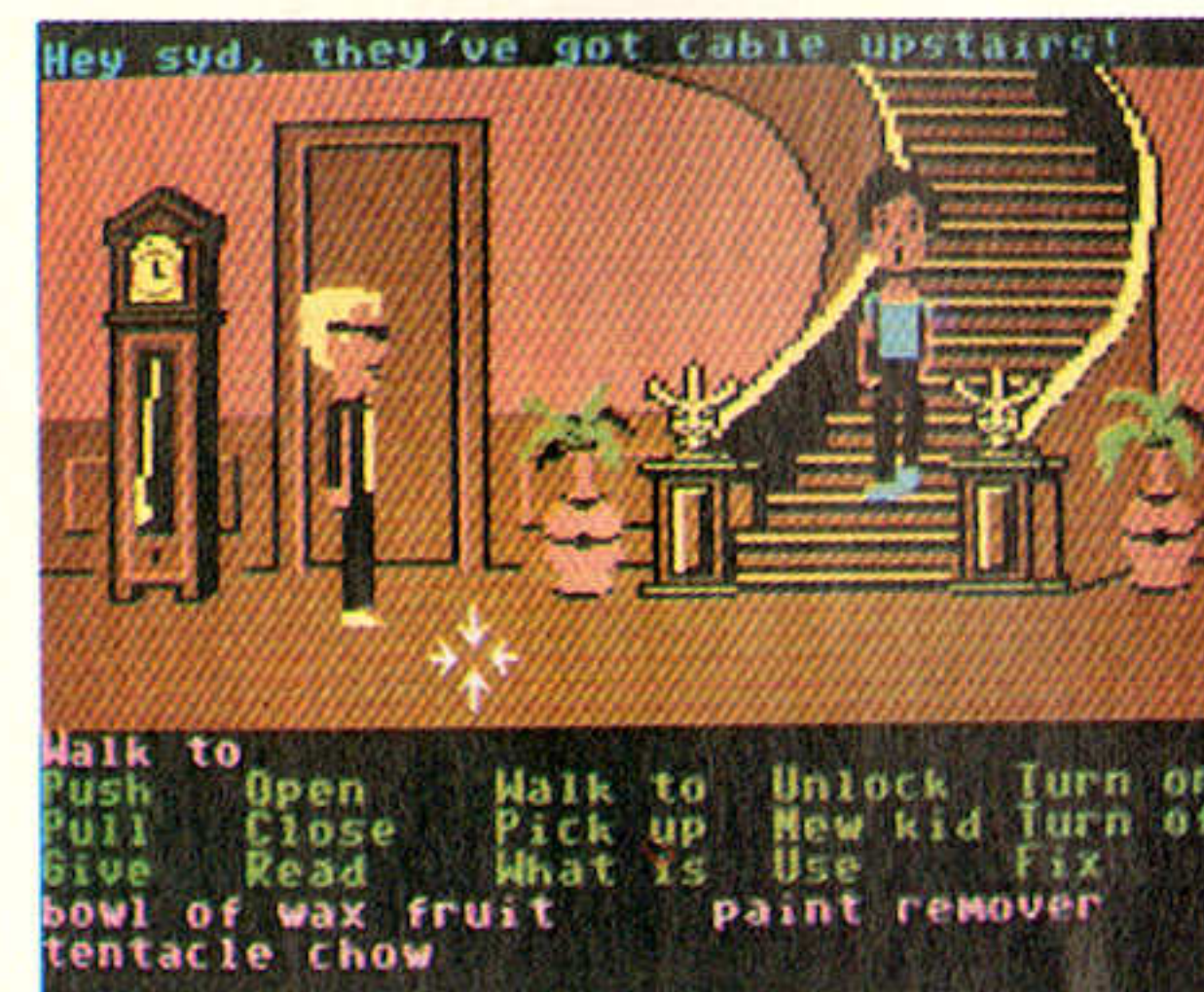
FERRARI FORMULA ONE is a Grand Prix racing simulation. Race a full season on the international circuit, competing against seven of the world's best drivers on 16 famous tracks. Mechanical aptitude is also handy as you fine-tune your suspension, engine systems, tires, fuel mixtures, aerodynamics, etc. Authentic handling characteristics. First-

person view with a detailed cockpit and gauges. This is far more than an arcade racing game, it is a true simulation of the high-tech world of Grand Prix. Amiga. Electronic Arts. Circle Reader Service Number 16.



Rogue Celery

Take the challenge and charge into the first of 99 mazes in the new title, **DEMON STALKERS** (The Raid on Doomfane). You got your bloodthirsty rats, mad monks, whirling dervishes, snappers and other baddies in an arcade-style dungeon adventure. Top-down, full scrolling mazes. A construction set that lets you build your own sequel. Save game feature. C64/128. By Micro Forte and Electronic Arts. Circle Reader Service Number 2.



Rocky Horror Returns

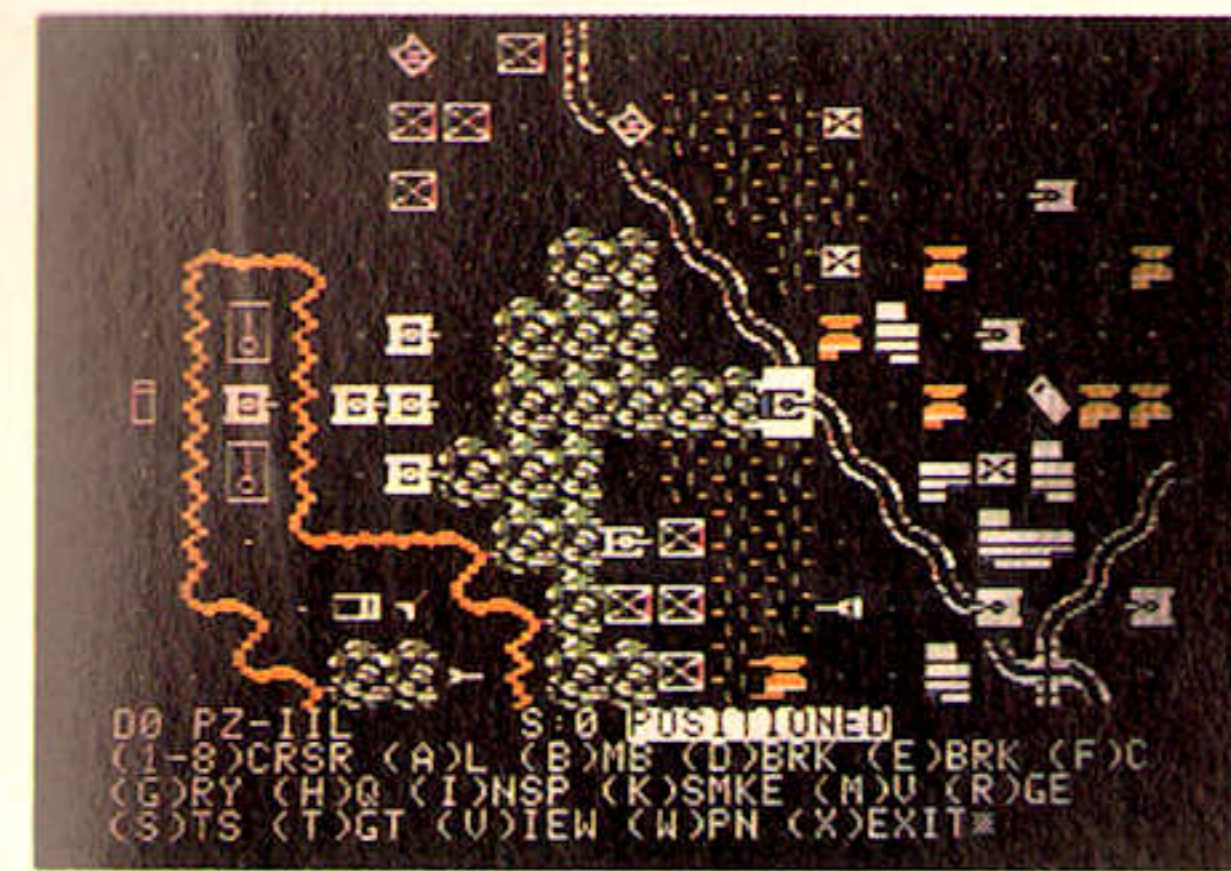
If you liked Rocky Horror Picture Show,

the Addams Family, and even The Munsters, you'll probably enjoy **MANIAC MANSION**. Dave and his friends have to rescue Sandy from a haunted mansion before she donates her brains to Dr. Fred. She's not about to give up her brains willingly of course - Dr. Fred has kidnapped her and Dave must get to her soon. There are many puzzles to solve and the 3D graphics give you a great perspective on things. Find out why there is a nuclear reactor in the basement, a chain saw in the kitchen and what a Green Tentacle is. C64/128, Apple IIc/IIe, IBM, Tandy, from Lucasfilm Games. Circle Reader Service number 63.



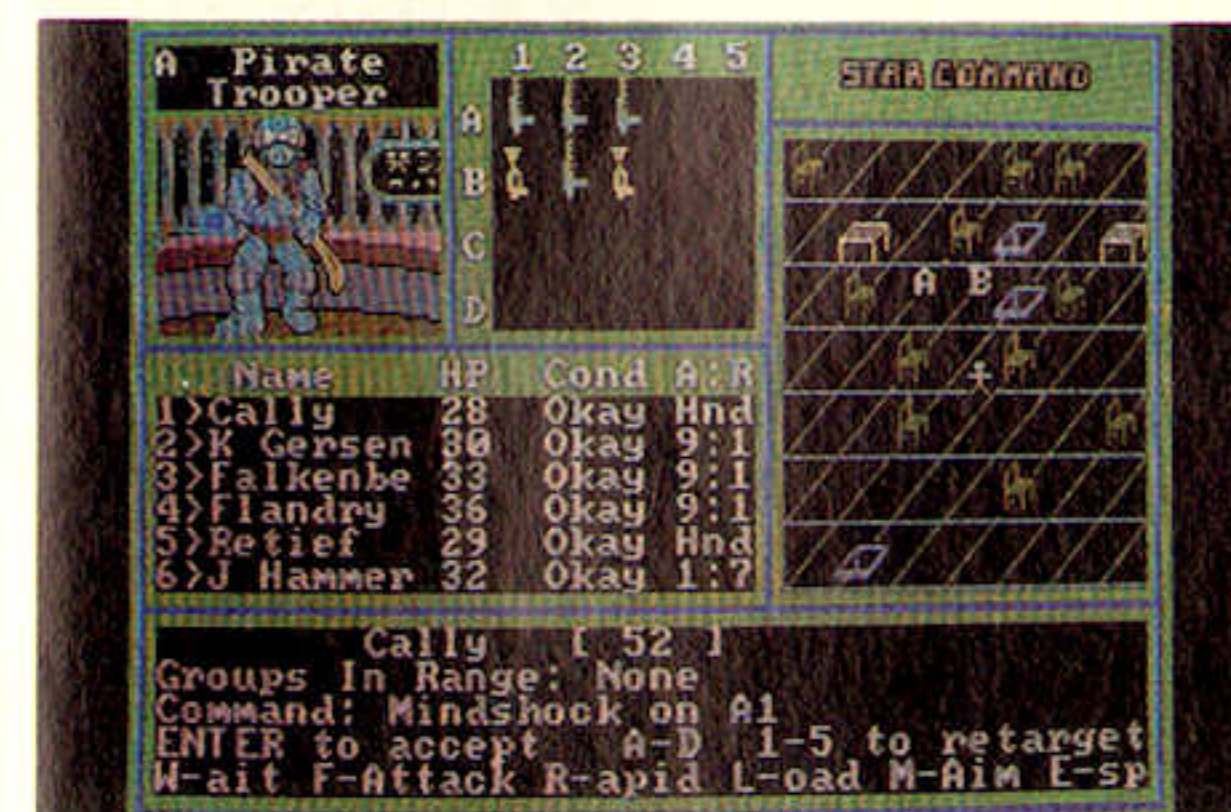
More Racing

Car racing seems to be getting more popular in computer gaming; after all, it is the largest spectator sport in the world. Anyway, **TEST DRIVE**, lets you pick your dream car and race it against the clock while watching out for radar traps and possible arrest. Five cars are available: Ferrari Testarossa, Lotus Turbo Esprit, Porsche 911 Turbo, Lamborghini Countach, and the American Classic Corvette. You'll even hear the sound of the engine as you rev one of these exotic autos up to redline. C64/128, Atari ST, Apple II, Amiga, IBM, from Accolade. Circle Reader Service number 65.



Where's My Picket Sign

A new WWII military simulation, **PANZER STRIKE!**, is now available. Features extremely detailed tactical combat. Each unit symbol represents one tank/gun or a squad of infantry. Three theatres are covered: the entire Eastern Front, 1940 Western Front and the North African campaign. You can simulate single battles or entire campaigns. You may create your own forces, maps and missions. Rated for Advanced war gamers. Apple 64K & C64/128. Strategic Simulations. Circle Reader Service Number 9.



Captain Kirk to the Bridge!

A new space role-playing game, **STAR COMMAND**, from Doug Wood - designer of the PHANTASIE trilogy. The Earth has been destroyed by hostile beings. The player controls a crew of eight star troopers that have been assigned to save the remaining inhabitants of the galaxy. Characters travel throughout the galaxy exploring

planets and space stations in search of objects, people and enemies. The player may engage in hand-to-hand or ship-to-ship combat. IBM. Strategic Simulations. Circle Reader Service Number 10.



Save The Earth

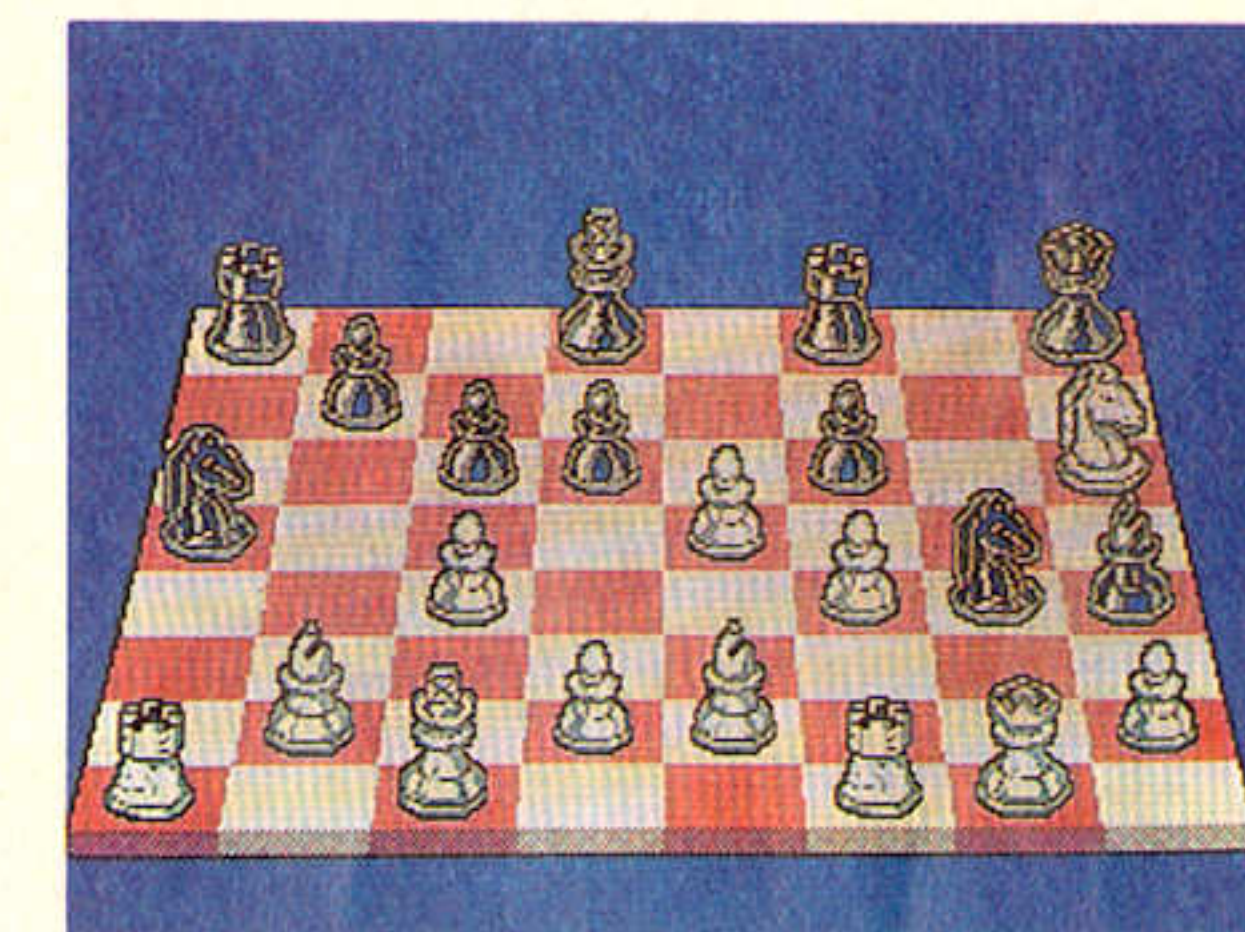
COSMIC RELIEF asks the game player to help save the world from being struck by an asteroid the size of Louisiana. Unfortunately, only Professor Renegade, who originally predict the disaster, can save the earth and he is now a hard to find recluse. You must find Professor Renegade, which is no easy task, convince him to help, and then construct an anti-cyclone deflector. And time is running out. This interactive action adventure game is brand new. C64/128, Atari ST, Amiga, from DataSoft. Circle Reader Service number 62.



A Crazy Race

CRAZY CARS is a racing game that is run over three tracks (six on the Amiga)

and allows the player to race against the clock in a variety of high-performance cars. You start with a Mercedes 560 SEC and if you are able to complete the race before time runs out you move up to a Porsche 911 Turbo, then a Lamborghini Countach, then to a Ferrari GTO. The race is run on the Arizona, Space Shuttle and Florida tracks with the Amiga version adding Mountain, Malibu and New York tracks. This game is a big hit in the European market. IBM, Amiga, Atari ST, from Titus. Circle Reader Service number 60.



Your Move, Boris

THE CHESSMASTER 2000 is not new but is probably the best chess game you'll find on computer. It draws from an opening library of over 71,000 moves and displays a combination of classical and modern strategy in the mid-game. There are twelve levels of play and you can play against the computer, have the computer referee a game between two opponents, or have the computer play itself so you can watch and learn. 3D is available on some machines and the board can be turned 90 degrees to see every angle. C64/128, Atari ST & XL, Mac, Apple II, Amiga, IBM, from Software Toolworks. Circle Reader Service number 64.

Competition, Cooperation and CONTRA

By Rusel Demaria



In the wild, games are training for future combat. Young lions or wolves engage in mock battles to hone their skills and develop coordination. Even those cute pet kittens we all find so endearing are following an instinctual directive. Thus, it is with some distress that I see computer games of violence where there seems to be no other purpose than to blast away nameless enemies with non-stop automatic weaponry. Is this a generation of kids destined to grow up to be Rambo?

Redeeming the Game

There are a number of known benefits to computer games. In general, most people acknowledge that they increase hand-eye coordination. Therapists in hospitals have found computer games help some patients recover. Moreover, video games are interactive, not passive like ordinary TV; some are even creative in that they allow the player to develop his or her own games.

One of the other 'hidden' benefits of video games has to be the way they can stimulate thinking and logic. This is not true of all games, but anyone who has witnessed a young person mastering a difficult game will see many different strategies tested, and strokes of sheer intuition which result in success over obstacles. Those video games which make people think are among the best.

CONTRA

Konami's **BOLD** for the Nintendo Entertainment System is one of those games I thought would be nothing but Rambo training. In the game, the player is armed with a machine gun. He (the characters are always male) is stripped to the waist, and must run, jump, and shoot his way through a series of missions through the jungle, various fortresses, a waterfall, a snowfield, and, finally, a giant alien's very body. The game is pretty much non-stop action, and though the graphics are excellent, the play very smooth, and the game itself difficult and challenging. I was disturbed by the callousness of the killing in the game.

I can't say I ever got to enjoy the wanton death in the game, but I did learn something new about video games that I had never actually observed. To understand this observation, you must understand that this game

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Computer Play

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can be played by one or two players. In the two player game, the players are on the same side. Fortunately, they can't accidentally shoot each other, and they must stay on the same screen (meaning that if one player lags behind, the other player will be unable to advance).

My first impression came from watching two kids, Alex and Shan, play the game. One of the keys to the game has to do with the ammunition a player uses in his or her gun. From time to time, special symbols appear on the screen after the player shoots a particular enemy or a special ammunition canister that flies across the screen. Each kind of ammo has a different effect, and in terms of the game, these are highly prized commodities.

The two boys were highly competitive — a normal mode of operation when playing video games. When the younger one, Alex, would shoot something to reveal a new ammunition type, Shan would often collect it (or vice versa) and fights would ensue.

"You stole my ammunition."

"It isn't YOURS!"

"I killed the guy, I should get it..."

And so forth.

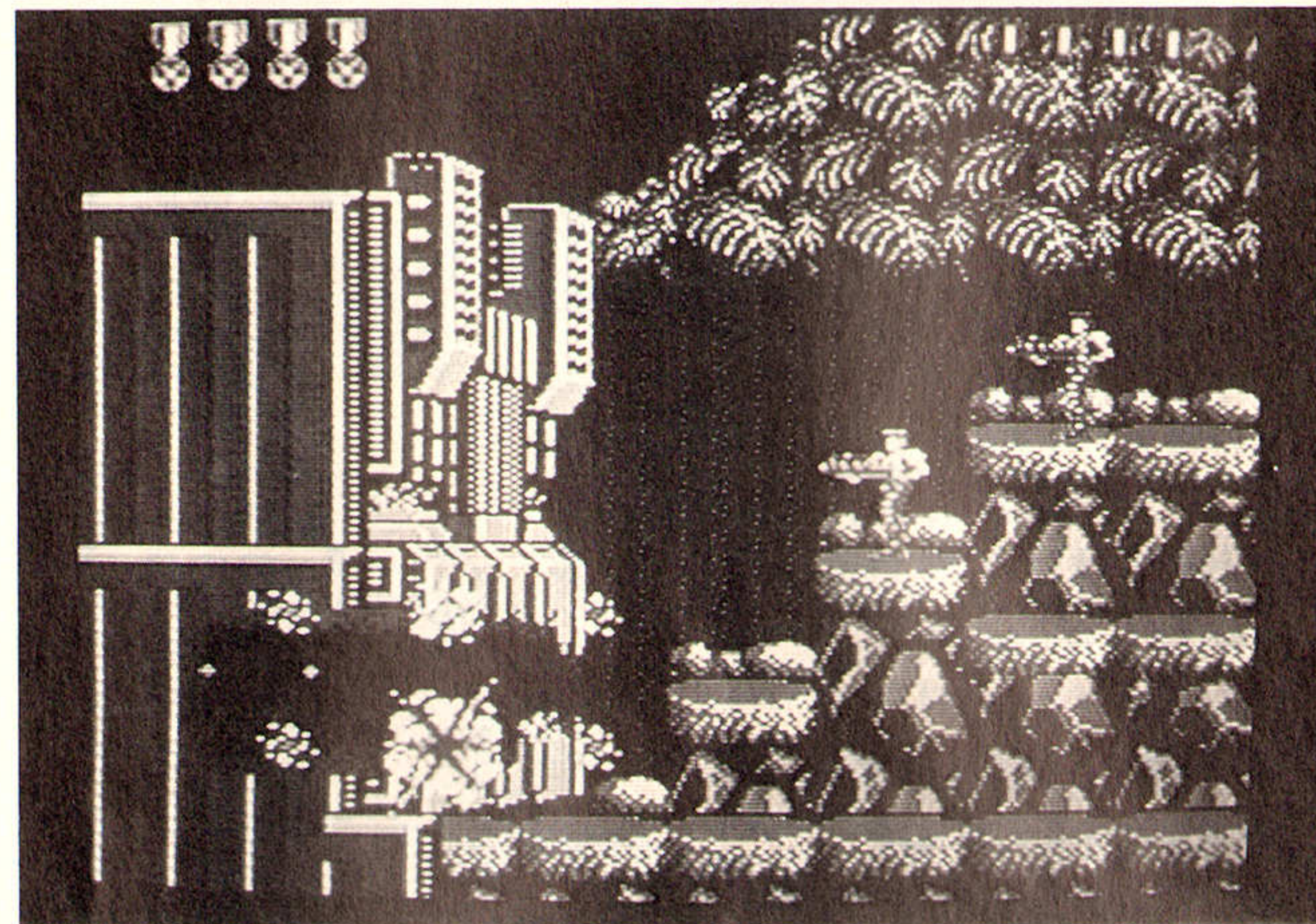
They argued and bickered along, always getting killed long before the end of the first mission. It didn't look as if they had much chance of getting anywhere.

Now I was observing. There wasn't much chance of my playing the game. These kids were totally absorbed in it, and I didn't have a chance at the controllers. So I watched. I saw that there were places where they got killed consistently, but that if one player were to cover the other, they could advance without mishap. I also suggested that there was enough ammunition for them both, and that if they each got the "good stuff," they would be able to do better.

My suggestions were drowned out in the constant gunfire, so I watched.

The Birth of the Idea

It was slow when it came, but it brought a wry smile to my lips. It happened when one or the other of them said, "You take that



ammo, and I'll take the next one." Shortly after that, Alex realized that if he found a good position and covered Shan, they would get by the sniper that kept killing them. The strategy worked, and a new idea was born — cooperation.

It wasn't long before they were working like a smoothly oiled team. There was no more bickering. They began to share strategic ideas and to deal out their video death and destruction with much greater success. Before long, they were through the wall of the first fortress and onward.

They went right back to their competitive ways on other games, but competition isn't all bad. After all, the goal of most games is to win, not to let the other guy win. But Contra is an exception. Another is the arcade version of Double Dragon, one of the very popular games in the arcades. Unfortunately, the Nintendo version of DOUBLE DRAGON (from Tradewest) is not a two player game, but in the arcades, you see kids working together to maim and destroy very well.

I still have reservations about death and destruction games, but I don't think they have any lasting effect if other influences in life will offer a perspective. I know the kids I saw playing Contra will not grow up to be killers. In fact, neither of them will ever have a desire to run around in a jungle and kill people they don't know. I'm sure of that.

On the other hand, I don't judge a game by its cover any more. I look for the deeper benefits. If I can't find any, I may dismiss the game as trivial or non-productive. But I usually find something to like about a game — even if it is just that it is fun to play. After all, if you take games too seriously, they aren't games anymore, are they?

Circle Reader Service Number 81.

Name: **CONTRA**
Type: **Arcade Action**
Format Reviewed: **Nintendo**
Publisher: **Konami, Inc.**
Ages: **6 to adult**
Players: **one at a time: 1 or 2**
Requirements: **Nintendo Entertainment System (works well with Max or Advantage controllers)**
Price: **\$39.95**

Ability Level: **Intermediate to difficult**
Packaging: **Average (6)**
Documentation: **Adequate (6)**
Graphics/Text: **Excellent (8.5)**
Playability: **Very Good (8.0)**

CP RATING: **7.63**

The COMPUTER PLAY SCORECARD

One of the unique features of our magazine is the patented COMPUTER PLAY SCORECARD. In order for you to be able to utilize it to full advantage, we will explain the definitions of the various categories and give details on the final CP RATING.

NAME: Is the specific name found on the game package.

TYPE: We will attempt to specify the category of game being reviewed. Choices include ARCADE, ADVENTURE, TEXT, SIMULATION, TRADITIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, CREATIVITY, STRATEGY and CARTRIDGE.

FORMATS: The currently available formats will be listed. Normally, we will also note the version of the game that was used for the review.

PUBLISHER: The company which created the game.

DISTRIBUTOR: The company which actually sells the game.

DESIGNERS: The individuals who designed the game.

AGES: The suggested age range for which the game is appropriate.

of PLAYERS: The number of players who can play at one time.

REQUIREMENTS: Specific hardware or memory requirements beyond the minimum computer system for a specific format.

PRICE: The manufacturer's suggested retail price.

*** THE RATINGS ***

ABILITY LEVEL: Beginner, Intermediate or Advanced. Our reviewers are instructed to rate this from the viewpoint of the "average" gamer.

PACKAGING: Are the materials slick and colorful? Does the package look professional? Are "bonus" items

provided to enhance the game experience?

DOCUMENTATION: Are the instructions clear and understandable? Are all game situations covered? Are all necessary player aids or maps provided?

GRAPHICS/TEXT: Are the screen graphics clean and colorful? Are the graphics exciting? Do they add to the game? Do the graphics take full advantage of the machine's capabilities? For text games, was the story exciting and imaginative? This category includes sound and animation.

REALISM: This rating is for vehicle simulations, war games, historical games and traditional games (such as Chess). Does the game faithfully recreate the "look and feel" of the events being simulated? Are the statistics or historical facts correct? Did the game give you a true experience?

PLAYABILITY: The big one. Did the game hold your interest? Did you play for hours or get bored immediately? Did the game draw you into another world? Would you immediately want to show the game to a friend? Did the game break new ground in design? Did you want to play it again the next day?

THE NUMBERS

As you will note when reading a SCORECARD, each reviewer rates the game in each category and assigns a text and numerical rating.

A formula is then applied to the various ratings in order to reach the final CP RATING, the reviewer's overall impression of the game.

The percentages for each category are — PACKAGING 10%, DOCUMENTATION 15%, GRAPHICS/TEXT 25%, REALISM 25% and PLAYABILITY 50%.

Yes, the percentages total 125%. This is because some games can only be rated for GRAPHICS but not for REALISM (such as PAC-MAN). Others can be rated for both but one category is more important than another. In these

cases, the 25% is split. FLIGHT SIMULATOR might be rated 10% for GRAPHICS and 15% for REALISM.

The breakdown in percentages to each category is subjective but represents our best efforts to assign a single rating for every game. We feel that every category is important. The game may be great but cheap packaging can really detract from full enjoyment.

PLAYABILITY

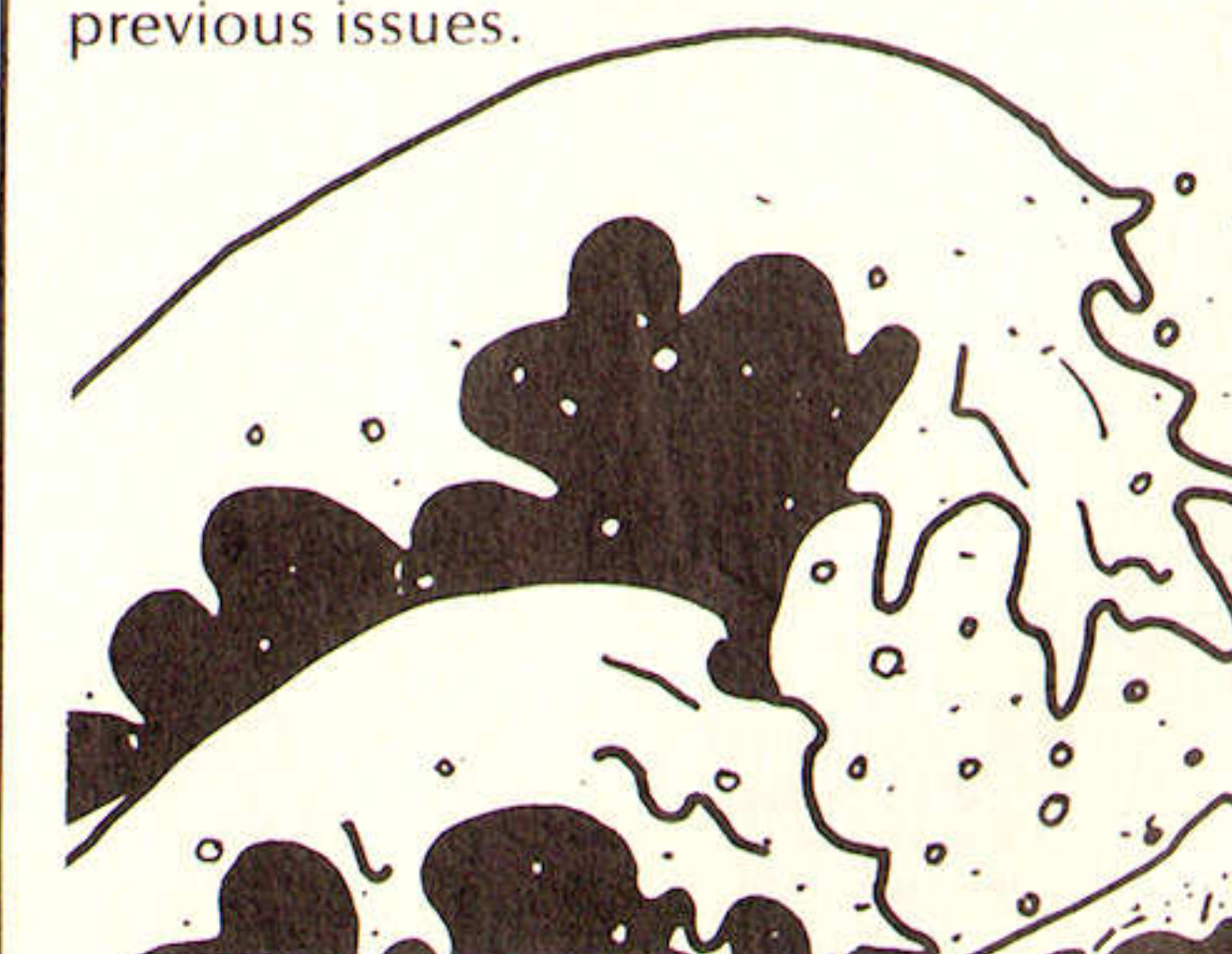
Despite the fact that there are five categories in the rating process, you will note that a game will NEVER get a truly good rating without getting a good score for playability.

READER INPUT

We give you the ratings for each category. If your own desires are different than ours then you can still work out your own formula. Perhaps you are totally uninterested in packaging. In that case, simply focus on the other category ratings.

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The actual space taken up by the scorecards is small but they are the essential part of this magazine. The credibility of our reviewers and the magazine itself rides on each scorecard. We want a casual reader to be able to quickly spot the winners and losers each month. We welcome suggestions on how this process can be improved and standardized. Each issue will contain a summary of all ratings from previous issues.



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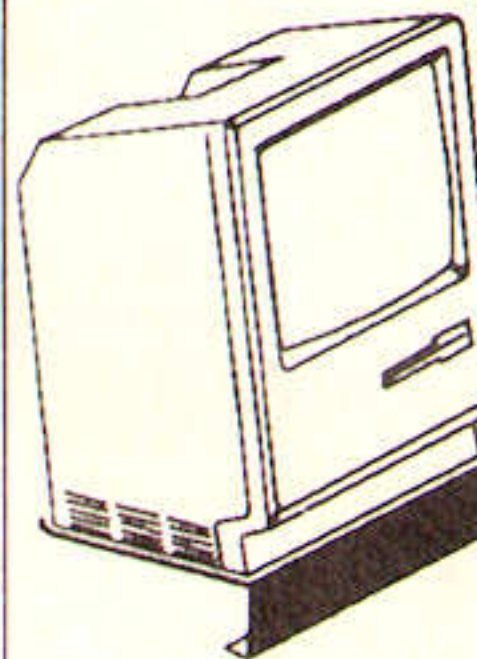
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MacGames

Some of the Best New Mac Entries

By Rusel Demaria

More than one game developer has told me that the **Macintosh** makes a lousy game machine. They cite a litany of shortcomings — mouse instead of joystick, bit mapped screen, no color, etc. Needless to say, those developers are making games for other machines. I don't argue. Who am I to argue with game developers, after all?

I don't argue, but the evidence suggests otherwise. Sure, the games you find on the Mac may not be exactly the same sort of game you find on those other machines (with some exceptions), but, surprisingly, the Mac has spawned more than its share of unique and excitingly creative games. It may be a lousy game machine, but it sure seems to spark people's imaginations!

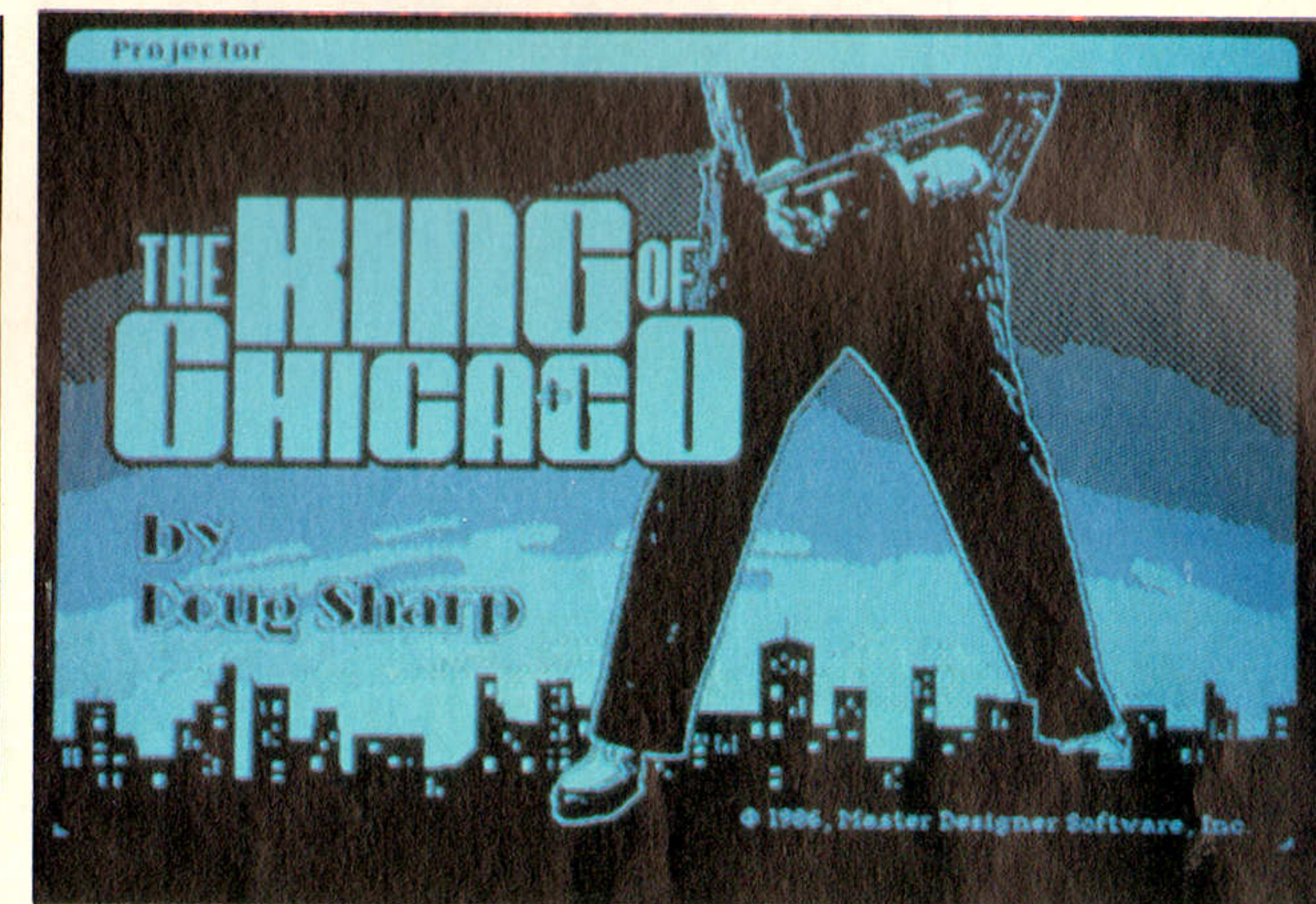
This column, then, is dedicated to the world of **Macintosh** games and entertainment software. As time goes on, I will look at the new titles coming out — titles which continue to stretch the limits of the existing Macs, and titles which will, eventually, push the envelope on newer, more powerful machines — beginning with the Mac II.

Looking Backwards

For this first column, though, I want to look back over several years of great games. For those who may have missed them, there are some extraordinary Mac products already out there.

Certain companies have excelled at Mac game production. In many cases, these are not the same companies that have dominated the computer game charts of other computer systems. Companies like **Silicon Beach** and **Miles Computing** have come out with excellent products only on the Mac. Other companies like **Mindscape**, **Broderbund**, **Activision**, and **Spectrum/Holobyte** have added excellent Mac titles to their wide range of computer games. Still other companies like **Infocom**, **Sir Tech**, and even **Microsoft** have introduced **Macintosh** versions of games that are popular on all formats.

My first Mac game, and one that is still fun to play, was **AIRBORNE!** — a simple, but compelling game which also served to pave the way for future games by using digitized sounds. This was something



uniquely Mac-like, and, still, few games on other systems can boast digitized sounds and pictures like many Mac games do.

Silicon Beach followed **AIRBORNE!** with a string of landmark products. Their **WORLD BUILDER** was the first adventure game authoring system that could be used by almost anyone. With the Mac's graphic interface, object oriented graphics, digitized sound libraries, and a simple, but powerful script language, **WORLD BUILDER** still inspires amateur game authors to try their hands and upload playable and imaginative games to various BBS services. In fact, there is whole genre of **WORLD BUILDER** games to explore. The only downside to **WORLD BUILDER** is that there was no way to compress the games to a reasonable size. The same knock applies to many **HyperCard** stacks, so **WORLD BUILDER** is in good company.

Another company that produced games early was **Miles Computing**. Although they have gone through some ups and downs, Miles produced an excellent flying simulation called **HARRIER JET**. This featured 3D images and a complex, but satisfying war simulation featuring the highly versatile Harrier Jet. Again, the mouse was used pretty well. Miles has a more complex sequel called **HARRIER JET II**. OK, the title isn't too imaginative, but the game is.

Miles real tour de force is **FOOL'S ER-**

RAND, a stimulating, confusing, and challenging collection of puzzles strung together in a story with a Tarot theme. **FOOL'S ERRAND** features wonderful graphics and some really imaginative puzzles. For people who like puzzles, **FOOL'S ERRAND** hits the spot like no other game I've seen on a computer. Some of the puzzles are really hard, and some, frankly, seem to require some luck, or some help, to solve. The Tarot theme lends a sense of mystery to this game.

FOOL'S ERRAND shares more than one quality with another game, this one from **Activision**, called **SHANGHAI**. Both games use a popular theme from another culture — Tarot and Mah Jong — though they develop a game that is unique. Also, both were games that I didn't expect to like much, but which surprised me by being addicting and compelling. It shows that you can't always tell until you try...

Mindscape has produced some landmark games as well. They developed a mouse driven, Mac-like interface for adventure games, beginning with **MIND-SHADOW** — a relatively simple graphic adventure — and culminating in the sinister and complex titles — **UNINVITED** and **SHADOWGATE**. **UNINVITED** was probably the first computer game of any kind that really gave me the creeps. Playing in the wee hours one night, I was

Channel Three

Video Games to Check Out

By Mark DeCarlo

Welcome to the New Age of video games. Gone are the days of slinking around newsstands, sneaking a peek at the latest Video Game publication. Adults can now revel, in public, in the fantastic array of new and exciting games available for home systems. Video games are no longer just greasy kids stuff. But if you're reading this, you already know that so let's move on.

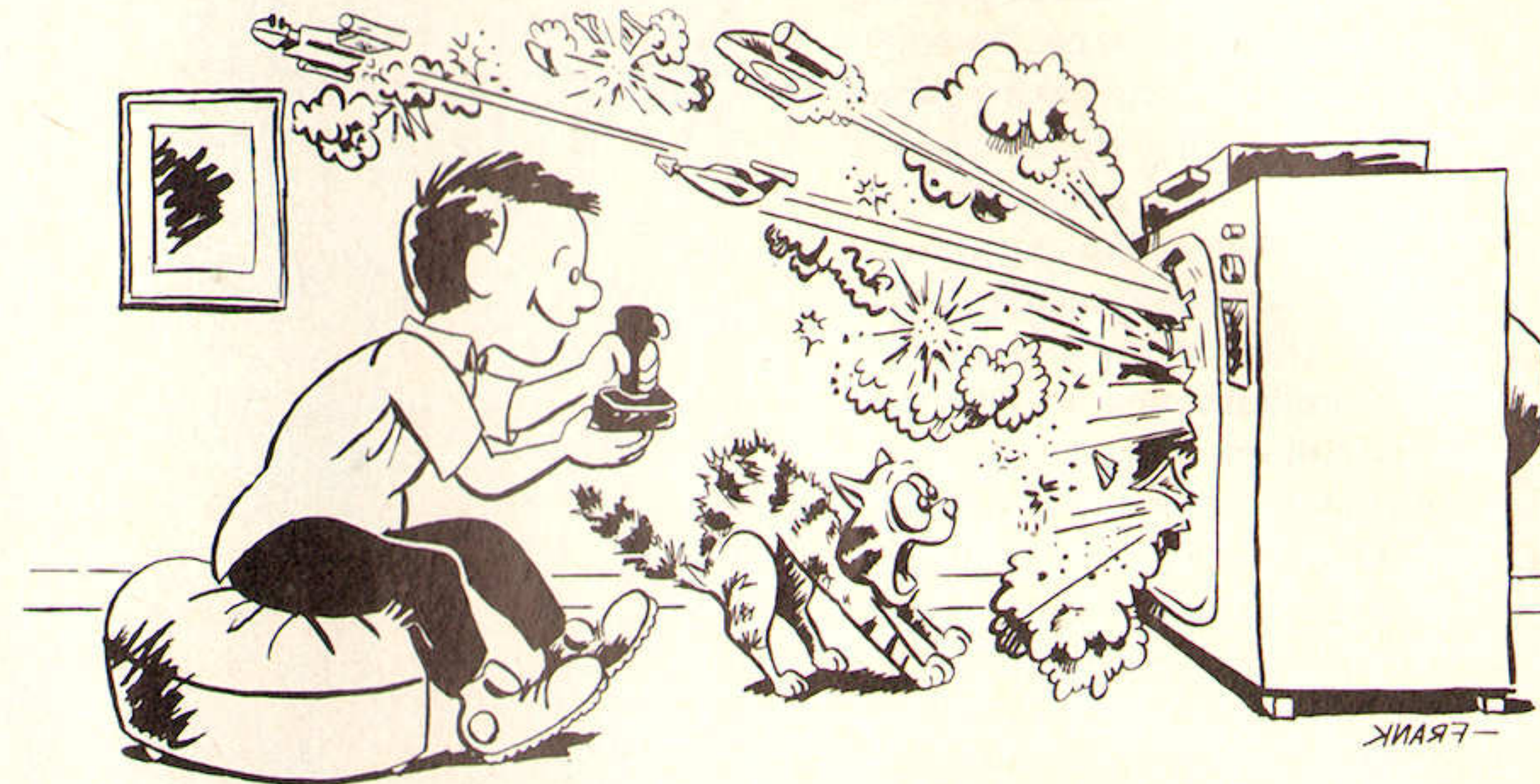
This column will focus on the many cartridges currently available for the **Nintendo System**, as well as advance previews of new releases. Some of the games we'll be looking at are new home versions of popular arcade games. Others are completely original. You'll hear about them as they become available. And we'll hopefully keep you one step ahead of the game by weeding out the bad from the excellent.

We all have different tastes. Some players prefer action/adventure cartridges, others strictly sports. We'll even be looking at Game Show formats. Longevity of interest is the key. The better games on the market are those you don't tire of quickly. However, there is no absolute scale on which everyone can agree, so I just learn the game and see if it's fun to play. If it is, I like it. If it isn't I'll tell you why. Fair enough?

HOGAN'S ALLEY

From the **Nintendo** Light Gun series, this cartridge features three different screens, each a variation on the shooting gallery theme.

Technically, the gun works incredibly well from up to 15 feet. The major feature, however, is also the main drawback: all you do is shoot. Unlike other "sports" cartridges, there is no two player competition. The burn out factor, therefore, may be higher than desirable. However, anyone who buys **HOGAN'S ALLEY** probably knows this up-front, so let's forget it for now.



In game A, each round presents a new mix of three different panel-targets per time interval. In all, there are three 'good guys' and three 'bad guys'. The trick is to blow the gangsters away without harming the 'professor', 'cop', or 'lady'. Players are credited for each correct kill, and penalized for each miss or incorrect kill. As the game progresses, the time intervals are shortened making it tougher to hit only the scummy guys.

These same six characters are used in game B, but the scene is a colorful urban alley set. You walk down the alley as gangsters and honest, law abiding folk spontaneously appear in doorways, hallways, and rooftops. It's sanitized violence, though to be honest, there is a certain Dirty Harry thrill to it. In my experience, there's usually a fascinating dialogue that accompanies the playing. It's a good chance to see what your friends are really like under pressure.

Game C is the toughest of the games. Tin cans are tossed from off-screen and it's your job to keep them in the air until they reach the opposite side of the screen and land them on one of three tiers. The cans are kept in the air by nicking them with bullets from underneath. Game C is by far the most challenging screen from a shooting-skill aspect.

Unfortunately, this is a one player game.

In order to compete with another gunman, you've got to finish your round, then let your opponent play a round. It's not a major problem, but the time between plays can get to be a bit long, especially if you've got two good players shooting.

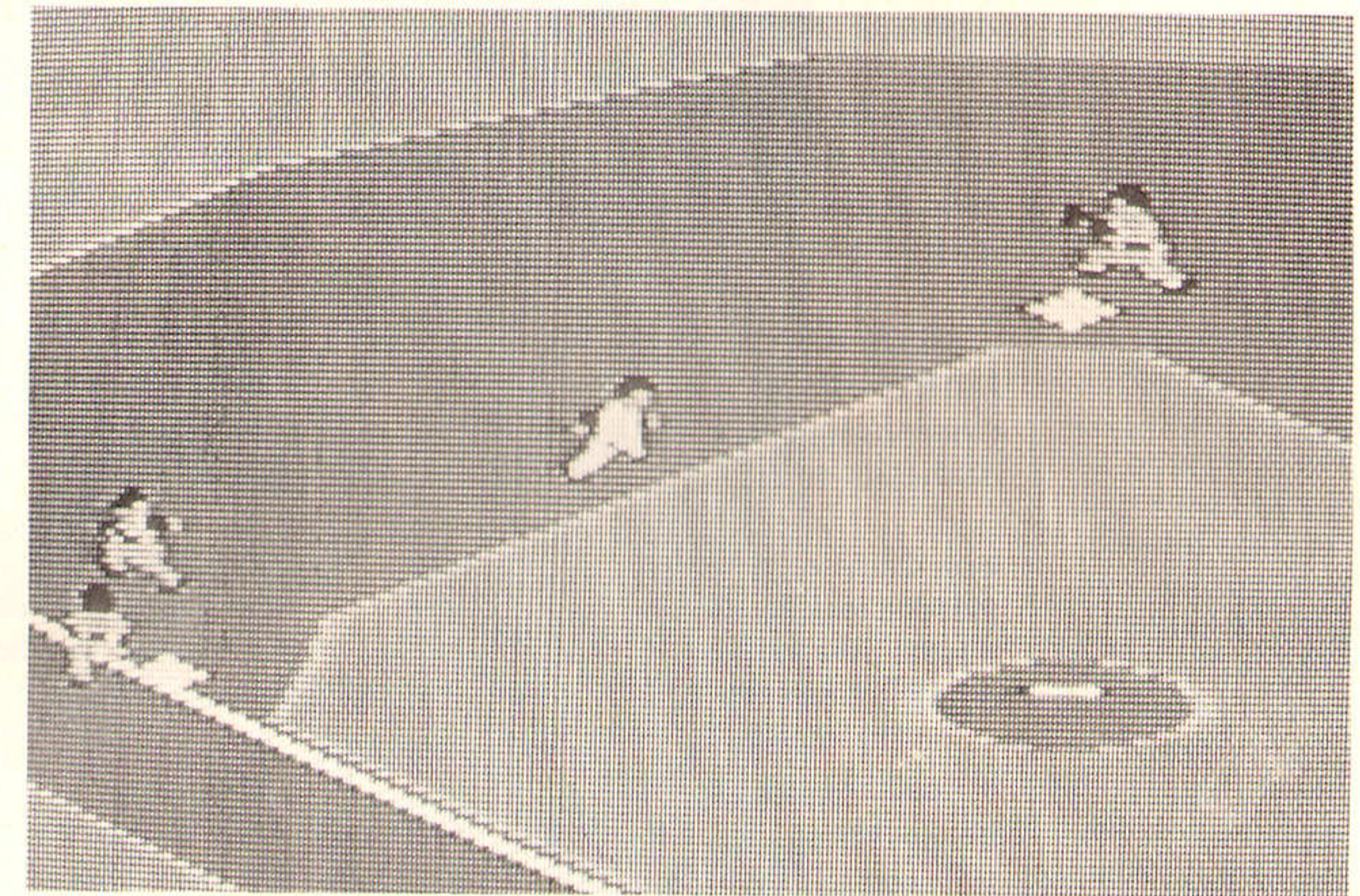
HOGAN'S ALLEY is a good cartridge to buy if you've got several others. For what it's designed to do, the game is great fun, however it can sometimes get a bit repetitive. Now if they could only design a lightgun that would work on the freeways...

Circle Reader Service Number 70.

RYGAR

From Tecmo for the **Nintendo System**, features at least ten different screen-worlds through which the mighty **RYGAR** must travel to kill the evil King Ligar and free the enslaved kingdom of Argool from its evil enslavement. Not a bad afternoon's work if you've got the time.

Holy flute of Pegasus, this is a great game!! If you like adventure/action games, this one is a must for your library. Definitely not a game you'll be able to master in the first week, **RYGAR** presents an incredible array of panoramic worlds and disgusting creatures to destroy. Along the way, **RYGAR** must recover the artifacts that will allow him to scale the physical



obstacles between himself and the evil king. (How come in these games, there is never a nice-guy king who gives great parties?)

RYGAR must find and use a wind pulley, crossbow, coat of arms, suit of armor and the mighty Flute of Pegasus in order to even have a chance at getting to the King. Each of the creatures; Epoclon, Deathpigor, Molgolin, and Demorobruzer (a combination dragon-Sherman Tank) has to be dealt with in a different way. Therein lies the challenge to the game. Just when you think you've got the forest down pat, you're suddenly climbing up a rope with your grappling hook only to find some monster at the top, spitting deadly radiation. There are also three regions they don't even know about in the book. Their attitude seems to be "look around, then get back to us if you find something."

RYGAR is an exciting game, chock full of amazing and challenging creatures and terrain. This game forces the player to use all the skill at his or her disposal; quick reflexes, logic, and adrenaline-fueled survival instincts. A definite gothic winner.

Circle Reader Service Number 74.

ICE HOCKEY

For the **Nintendo System**, is a fast

moving- full-feature video hockey game, that has all the excitement and action of the real sport.

This was not one of **Nintendo's** first releases. And one session with **ICE HOCKEY** will show you why. Tremendous advances in game playing technology have allowed the wizards at the factory to create a truly exciting two player sport.

Though the instructions and commands are a bit complex, after they're mastered each player can control a whole team with only three buttons. Passing, shooting, even fighting are factors in the exciting race to out score either your opponent or the computer.

The game starts with the selection of teams. Each of the six teams, USA, USSR, Canada, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Sweden have different inherent strengths and weaknesses. Exploration over time is the only way to find out which team is best for you.

Next, you have to select your starting line up. There are three basic types of

players on your team; small and fast, medium, and big and slow. You choose which of these characters you want playing at each of four forward positions. After you team is set, it's face-off time.

Through the elaborate commands you can win the face-off, pass to any of your players, and then shoot on goal. While on defense, players can body-check and bolster defense in front of the goalie.

Types of shots, from flips to slap-shots, are all determined by how long the B button is depressed and where you're headed. All the regular rules of the game are enforced and strategy plays an important part in ultimate victory.

ICE HOCKEY is a fast moving, complex, two-player game that uses all the elements of the real game in a workable video format. **Nintendo** has managed to integrate all the intricacies of this team-sport into an exciting and very playable competitive package. This game will enjoy a long life in your video collection, as you advance through five levels of difficulty while perfecting your game. Get a record of the Star-Spangled Banner and you're ready for the opening whistle. Circle Reader Service Number 73.

BASES LOADED

From **Jaleco**, **BASES LOADED** is an

Questbusters
PO Box 525
Southeastern, PA 19399
215-296-7003

Romstar Inc
22857 Lockness Ave
Torrance, CA 90501
213-539-2744

Sierra On-Line
PO Box 485
Coarsegold, CA 93614
800-344-7448

Sir-Tech Software
PO Box 245
Ogdensburg, NY 13669
315-393-6633

Spectrum Holobyte
2061 Challenger Drive
Alameda, CA 94501
415-522-3584

SSG
1747 Orleans Ct
Walnut Creek, CA 94598
415-932-3019

Strategic Simulations
1046 N. Rengstorff Ave
Mountain View, CA 94043
415-964-1353

SubLOGIC
PO Box 4019
Champaign, IL 61820
800-637-4983

Sun Corp of America
2250 Elmhurst Rd
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007
312-228-0451

Taito America
660 S. Wheeling Rd
Wheeling, IL 60090
312-520-9280

Tengen
1901 McCarthy Blvd
Milpitas, CA 95035
408-435-2650

Tevox
4205 First Ave, 100
Tucker, GA 30084
800-554-1162

Three-Sixty Pacific
2105 S. Bascom, 290
Campbell, CA 95008
408-879-9144

Vic Tokai Inc
370 Amapola Ave 104
Torrance, CA 90501
213-320-1199

XOR Corp
5421 Opportunity Ct
Minnetonka, MN 55343
612-938-0005

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attempt to make a realistic, full-feature two player baseball game for the statistically minded. Before there were video games, there were baseball games on the market. Unfortunately, most of them were simply lists of stats along with a book of rules and some dice. Baseball, is by its very nature, a statistical game. For people who like that kind of game, **BASES LOADED** may be for you.

The game starts with team selection and pitcher selection. Each team has players with different personal stats, and it's your job as manager to get the best squad on the field. The pitchers have ERA's ranging from 1.86 to well over 5.00. You've got to know baseball to play **BASES LOADED**. There are a host of other neat little touches that might have made this game a real winner. But I feel the designers made one fatal flaw in their design.

Perspective. So often when engineers attempt to accurately represent a three-dimensional activity in only two dimensions, problems arise. For sports games in

particular, **WHERE** you're looking **FROM** is almost more important than **WHAT** your looking **AT**. In the case of **BASES LOADED**, the creators made the wrong choice.

The whole game is played from a centerfield viewpoint, over the shoulder of the pitcher. In **Nintendo's** version of **BASEBALL** (in my next review), the point of view is from above and **BEHIND** the plate, from behind the catcher.

This perspective shows the ball coming towards the hitter and more accurately emulates the old pinball-type baseball games. It, quite simply, is more like real baseball. When real baseball is televised, the majority of the shots are from behind home plate. Years of TV baseball has proven that this is simply the best way to show three dimensional baseball on a two-dimensional screen.

In **BASES LOADED**, the pitch seems to be moving away from you, the TV viewer, and towards the figure of the hitter. The sense of perspective and timing is com-

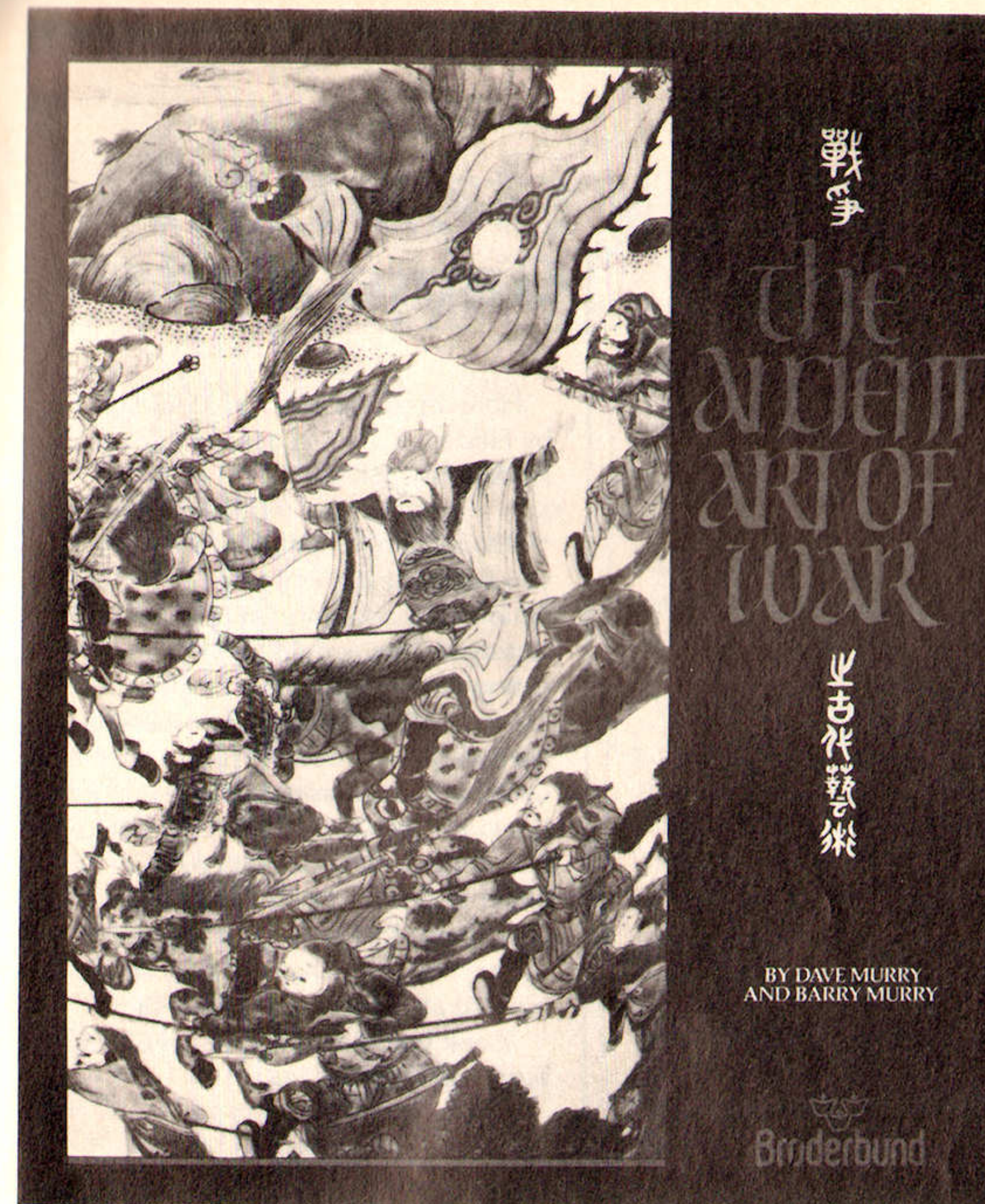
pletely lost. In it's defense, an additional aspect gained if the pitcher is control.

With **BASES LOADED** the pitcher not only controls whether a pitch is a curve or fastball, but how high or low it will be. The centerfield perspective allows the additional up or down control, but sacrifices the sensation of forward movement other games possess.

The accessory features and graphic action is superb. The players look very lifelike and move more like real people than any other game I've seen. But all these peripheral improvements are wasted on a game that is flawed at it's core. If Jaleco could reconfigure the game to reflect the "behind the plate" perspective, it would truly be a great game.

BASES LOADED is like buying a \$3,000 car and spending \$20,000 on the add-on options. It has all the little things that earlier and less sophisticated games don't have, but they are wasted on a visually confusing presentation of perspective.

In my next reviews: **TENNIS**, **VOLLEYBALL**, **BASEBALL**, and a few surprises. Circle Reader Service Number 72.



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taken by surprise when what looked like a pretty nineteenth century lady turned out to be a ghoulish fiend who promptly slashed me to ribbons.

Mindscape continued to innovate with **KING OF CHICAGO** (from **CinemaWare**), a deliciously depraved adventure in which your goal is to play as rotten a gangster as ever graduated from Capone's Academy of Sleazy Toadies and Heartless Villains. The truly grotesque animated 3D faces of the characters, and the 30's dialog all make **KING OF CHICAGO** a classic game. To follow from **CinemaWare**: **DEFENDER OF THE CROWN** and **SDI**. Another **Mindscape** idea, one that has been copied since, was **COMIC WORKS** — a make-your-own comics graphics program with a hefty selection of options and features.

More recently, **Mindscape** has teamed up with **BALANCE OF POWER** author, Chris Crawford, to create **TRUST AND BETRAYAL** — another innovative and unusual game. **TRUST AND BETRAYAL** has you trying to psych out a cast of alien creatures in an alien contest for information and power. The aliens, named after Crawford's pets, are a strange and

emotional set of colleagues, and you communicate with them in an icon-based telepathic language developed by Crawford for the game.

The Sports Game

Sports is always a good theme for games — big surprise — and the **Macintosh** lexicon boasts some fine sports simulations. At the top of the list are **PCAI's MAC RAQUETBALL** and **MACGOLF**. **MAC RAQUETBALL** somehow captures the feeling of a game of Raquetball in a way no other game approaches. With a variety of realistic sound effects and a pair of pseudo-realistic players, this game can create a fanatic following.

MACGOLF is one of the best golf simulations around, and, like other Mac products, creates a sense of realism with its excellent graphics and digitized sounds. On a Mac II, **MACGOLF 3.0** displays in vivid colors.

Another good sports simulation is **HARD BALL!** from **Accolade**.

For a lousy game machine, the Mac hasn't done too badly.

And There's More

Spectrum/Holobyte has brought us **GATO** — the original submarine simulation, and **FALCON** — one of the best flying simulations around, and one that lets you dogfight against another human enemy over a network! Also, **PT-109** for boat freaks, and **ORBITER** — at least someone can fly the Space Shuttle!

Broderbund has brought us several fine titles, although they still produce the bulk of their titles for other systems. But **ANCIENT ART OF WAR** is a stimulating and graphically appealing battle strategy game that features the ability to design your own campaigns. There are several great collections of campaigns available on BBS services if you get through the ones that come with the game, and you can create your own scenarios and share them, too.

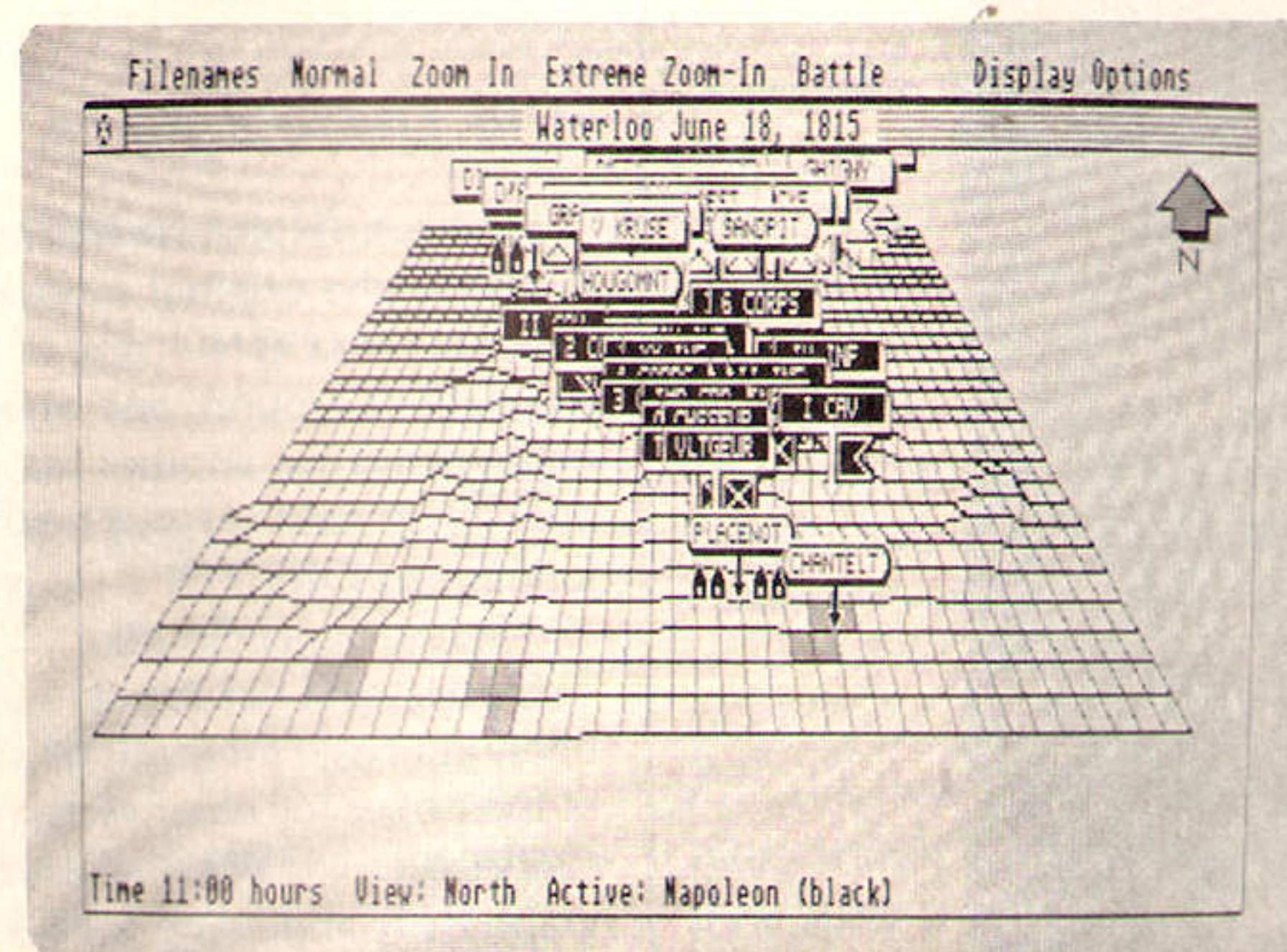
JAM SESSION, while it isn't exactly a game, is a classy music program that lets you jam along with music of various kinds. You can even compose your own set of riffs. My favorite is to play along with the hot jazz sounds reminiscent of Django Reinhardt. Any key on the keyboard yields a nifty lick, and some funny moments can result from deft tickling of the keys.

Other titles that stand out? **WIZARDRY**, **THE PAWN**, **MICROSOFT FLIGHT SIMULATOR**, and anything from **Infocom**. Also, **CRYSTAL QUEST** from **Green, Inc.** — one of the first games to play in color on the Mac II, and amusing on any system.

Then there are all the shareware and public domain games. **Air Traffic Controller**, **ShootOut**, **Let's Get Tanked**, **Scarab of Ra**, **MazeWars** (a two-person modem game), and **NetTrek** (Star Trek over Local-Talk). Also, **Dungeon of Doom**, **Rogue**, **Billiard Parlor**, and so many more. My favorite shareware games are **TimeOut** — breakout in a DA — and **Cap'n Magneto** — an irreverent space fantasy full of nifty touches. I hope to bring you more from the world of shareware and PD games in the future.

By the way, although the original **MazeWars** was shareware, the current version, **MAZEWARs+** is not. It is a commercial game, and worth the price of admission, from **MacroMind**.

Waterloo scenario from Rainbird's UMS.



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ward, and especially with the CIVIL WAR, too many bugs exist for the game to become a true success (e.g.; railway and sea movement is implemented poorly if at all, commanders are undifferentiated [Commodore Foote can wind up commanding the Army of the Potomac], supply rules are in short supply, and certain rules are not covered in the computer rules, although they are present in both the game and in the board-game rules, thereby leading to a semi-requirement that a prerequisite for the computer game is the board-game).

Simulations Canada has released numerous land and naval simulations (e.g.; **STALINGRAD**, **ROMMEL AT GAZALA**, **SEVENTH FLEET**, **MOSCOW CAMPAIGN**). Text only these require the use of the accompanying map and cardboard counters. An amalgam of the board and computer wargame, **SimCan** has garnered its own niche of the marketplace.

The Past and Future

Chris Crawford probably began the computer wargame with his **EASTERN FRONT** for the Atari. A game ahead of its time, its showing at Origins (the National Wargaming Convention) in the late 1970's showed the potential of computer wargaming. Mr. Crawford went on with **EXCALIBUR** (Atari), **BALANCE OF POWER** (Mac), and **PATTON VS. ROMMEL** (Mac/IBM).

But the cyclical nature of wargaming

now appears to be in a naval mode.

Electronic Art's PEGASUS, and **STRIKE FLEET** brought modern naval simulations into the mass market, MicroProse has released **RED STORM RISING** (nuclear submarine simulation), and **360 Software** is releasing **HARPOON** (modern surface tactical warfare).

A recent newcomer has shown that obscure land warfare is not always the key to failure. Koei has released **NOBUNAGA'S AMBITION** (unification of Japan in the sixteenth century), **ROMANCE OF THE TREE KINGDOMS** (second century China) and **GENGHIS KHAN** (forthcoming). The interplay of military, domestic, diplomatic and economic aspects will surely propel this company into the forefront of game design. Innovation and well-done execution can make even seemingly undoable designs into marketing successes.

In terms of machine use, the Atari (8-bit) and the Apple were the machines of choice in the early days of computer wargaming (1980-1983), succeeded by the Commodore (1985-1990?) and now by the IBM (1987-????). Granted, IBM graphics and sound leave much to be desired, the sheer memory and potential plus the existing user base mandates the demise of the 8-bit products in the near future.

Land wargamers see a dimming future for the short-run. But when Koei and other ambitious companies show their wares, the cycle will adjust accordingly. The compute game is here to stay!

Game Hints

Here are some hints on **STAR FLIGHT** by Electronic Arts, generously donated by reader, Ray Schmidt Jr.

***Read all notices at Star Port.

***Do local mining before travelling far so you have enough emporium. ***The Uhlek have a 'Central mind galagon', if destroyed, they would be helpless. ***You cannot be friends with both Elowan and Thyrnn. ***Listen to the minstrels, they are a very wise race. ***Try to get the red cylinder as soon as possible. Hint; it may be up in Uhler territory. ***The Velox and Spemin are not a tough race, don't be afraid of them. ***Use fluxes to save enpuriem. ***Do not get caught in a solar flare. ***The mechanics are your friendliest race after you get to know them.

Thank you, Ray, hope this is of help to our readers.

YO MARIO!

Another reader, T. R. of IL., recently submitted these hints for all first time **SUPER MARIO BROS.** owners. He feels the main thing to remember is to be open to new methods of defeating the obstacles, and here are some other hints to get you on your way;

***Get as many mushrooms as possible, some are referred to in the manual as '1 up' mushrooms, these add men to your supply of turns. ***The rest are called growth mushrooms that make Mario large. ***When Mario is large you can then get a fireflower to give him fireball powers. ***It is in this particular power mode that you can defeat the Dragon. ***Get all the coins you can, to add to your score. ***Some coins in the bricks are in multiples, and you can tell when they are gone by the fact that the bricks turn into metal walls with bolts on the four corners. ***When dealing with turtles, remember to jump on them and then kick them away by walking into them. ***Look for warp zones to up levels. ***Hit everything! for hidden points. ***Look for starmen, little stars with eyes, to get other interesting powers.

Again, thank you, T.R., for your help to all Mario fans.

Industry News Reprise

By Bob Cutler

Hello! 'General' (salute as you read this!) speaking.

I am adding a small note to the I.N. & V. column, basically about the beginnings of Computer Play Magazine.

Just a few short years ago, there was a deplorable lack of computer games on the market, as well as publications dedicated strictly to gamers. Being a gamer myself and already in the publishing business, (we own 17 other periodicals, including **Financial Opportunities** with 1.5 million readers) I knew that Computer Play magazine had to be included in our company's new publishing ventures.

I must admit that this was a personal decision and not one of a business nature. Several years ago I wanted to buy some games to play on my own brand new computer. I went hunting to find either a store that sold games or a magazine that published game reviews and contained mailorder advertising for games or hardware I may have needed. After hours of searching, the 'store' which I finally found, had a total of 2 games, of course, neither game was what I wanted. I asked the owner at that time why he didn't stock more games, and his reply was, "Sorry, I don't know of any more". I also looked for a magazine dealing with computer games, and after driving to approximately 12 different stores, and making dozens of phone calls, I finally did find a couple of them. They were being sold in only 2 retail stores in the whole city of Chicago. With a population of over 3 million people and a magazine buying public that visits over 5000 magazine retail outlets (both computer and mass market retailers) on a weekly basis in the Chicago area, you would of thought those publications would have been made more readily available to the consumer. Chicago is only one city in one state. This has been a major problem in all cities in all states and has existed through 1988, until the premier of Computer Play magazine. Total retail sales of other computer gaming magazines have never been over a few

Bob "The General" Cutler is the president of Computer Play and is very proficient when it comes to giving orders.

thousand copies. They did not sell over that amount in 1981, and in 1988 they still don't sell any more than a few thousand copies.

We aim to set a precedent.

How? Computer Play objectives are manyfold. Just this week Computer Play has added 10,000 retail stores to its list of outlets,

We will also, provide to you, the public, the information needed in the form of game reviews and editorial so that you can make quality buying decisions in terms of buying games and hardware for your recreational self-fulfillment.

The second half of that promise has to do with providing you with many hours each month of enjoyable reading. Additionally; Computer Play will be making it easier for you to purchase your computer and video games, and hardware at your favorite computer and mass merchandise store. These retail establishments will all be receiving Computer Play magazine. They will know in advance what games to purchase from their game and video distributors. The information will be provided to them in the format of editorial and advertising by game and hardware manufacturers.

Furthermore there are literally millions of people who have had no information given to them previously about the fun and enjoyment one can have by owning one's own computer and/or video system, and what type games and hardware can be purchased for their own personal recreation. Computer Play is opening the marketplace not only for present customers, but for future customers as well. Not a day goes by when our corporate headquarters in Skokie IL. alone, receives at least 100 phone calls with every imaginable question about our industry that is possible. Starting from what we think are the best games to buy, to where can one buy a joystick for one's IBM. Additional questions included: I have an Apple 11, with a black and white monitor, will color games run on this without loss of resolution? We even had dozens of calls from people all over asking us where and what to buy in a computer or video set so that they can start purchasing the games they read about in Computer Play.

Hundreds of additional questions are also put to us from our new subscribers. Letters are being included with their subscription payments asking similar questions and congratulating us on publishing the long needed Computer Play magazine. By the way, to all our inquirers, the answer is yes if you do subscribe to Computer Play, you do receive your magazine in the mail before it goes on sale in the computer and mass market stores.

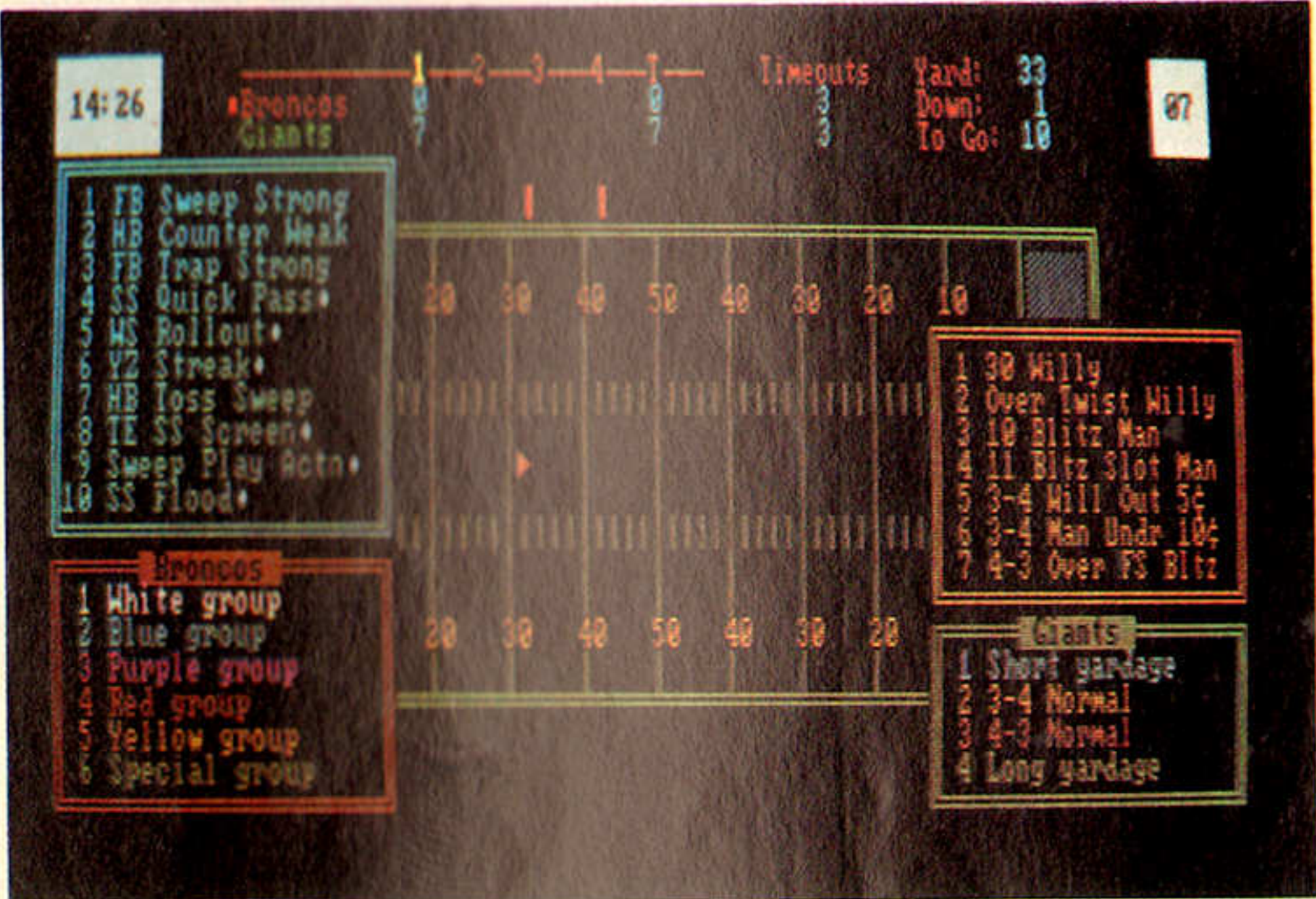
And personally, to all the callers in the Chicagoland area, who were told to buy their copies at their nearest Jewel food store or Osco drug, I did not expect Computer Play to sell out in over 600 of those stores in only 4 days! I will recommend the purchase of a subscription if only to assure against future issues being sold out at your buying location. I do think that the front cover featuring **Cinemaware's Three Stooges Software** had just a little to do with it. In fact I know it did.

To finish the story I started, in 1981 when I put together Computer Play I was not happy with it. I knew that the readership would really be huge and I was not going to publish 'another' computer gaming magazine that distributed only a few thousand copies. There was and is no computer gaming magazine published today that sells over 6500 copies, in the computer and mass market outlets...until the premier of Computer Play. If I was going to do it, then I was going to do it right. There are some companies that sell as many as 500,000 copies of an individual game. Not only must Computer Play reach these buyers for future game purchases and its reading material but of course we must reach the millions of additional consumers as well.

I expect computers and games in every home. Most of all I expect a copy of Computer Play Magazine in every home. Why so much space given to Computer Play in this **Industry, News and Views** column? Very simply put, Computer Play is the talk of the industry, we really don't mean to blow our own horn, but, oh what the heck, we will.

We look forward to having you as a reader for many issues to come and welcome your input. Thank you.

Coming Attractions



Next month our attention turns to the sports world. The October Computer Play will be on newstands September 23, just after the start of football season and just before the baseball playoffs and the start of basketball preseason.

In this issue, we'll feature a special section on sports games covering football, baseball and basketball. Tentatively scheduled for review will be **JOHN ELWAY'S QUARTERBACK** from Melbourne House (John will also be on the front cover), **4TH AND INCHES** from Accolade, **NFL CHALLENGE** from XOR and two more football games to be named later. **Pete Rose Pennant Fever** is Gamestar's

baseball entry and they also have **CHAMPIONSHIP Basketball: Two on Two**. Other baseball and basketball games will be picked from the many now available.

In addition, you'll be reading about **Death Sword** from Epyx. This review is being written by Rawson Stovall, the 16-year-old "vid kid" who will be one of our regular reviewers. Another new reviewer, Fred Blechman, a former Navy fighterpilot, will be writing a regular column on flight simulators.

We'll also be hearing from Jean-Michel Blottiere, editor-in-chief of **TILT**, France's largest computer game magazine. He'll be sending us a regular column giving us a European



perspective. Now you'll know what's hot and what's not in all of Europe.

Other features tentatively scheduled include **ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS** from Koie, **JAM SESSION** and **PHM PEGASUS** from Broderbund and Electronic Arts respectively. These last two reviews will be done by Rusel Demaria our correspondent from Maui. Rusel will also continue his Mac column next month.

In upcoming issues this fall, we'll be featuring a special flight simulator section, a section on hardware for game players, and of course, all the latest and greatest games available. Hope to see you next month.

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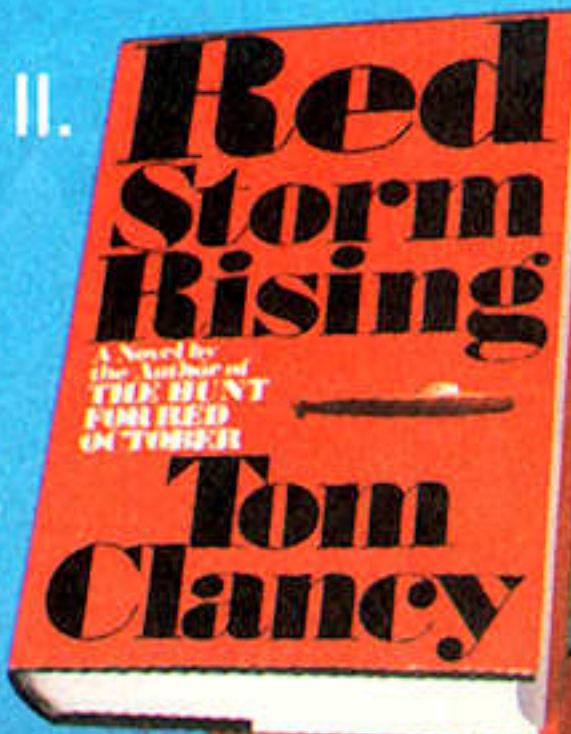
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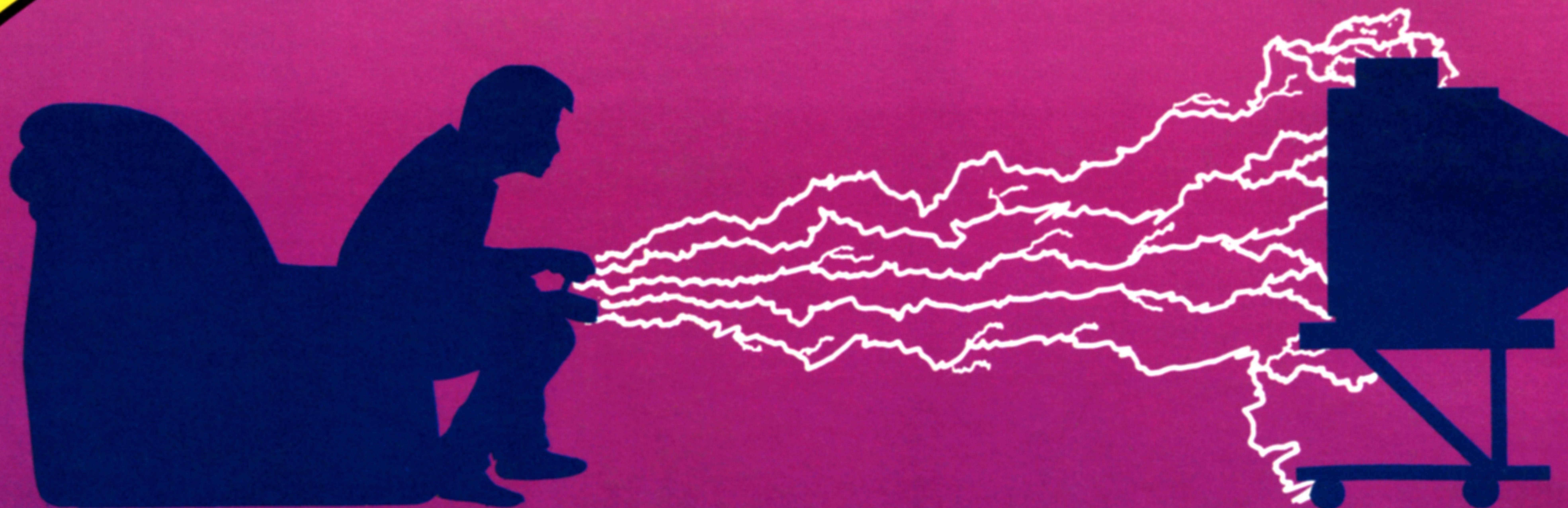


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